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LIVES

OF

ILLUSTRIOUS AND DISTINGUISHED

IRISHMEN.

LIVES
OF
ILLUSTRIOUS AND DISTINGUISHED
IRISHMEN,
FROM
THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE PRESENT PERIOD,
ARRANGED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER,
AND EMBODYING A
HISTORY OF IRELAND IN THE LIVES OF IRISHMEN.

EDITED BY
JAMES WILLS, A.M.T.C.D., M.R.I.A.
Author of *Letters on the Philosophy of Unbelief*, &c., &c., &c.

EMBELLISHED BY A SERIES OF HIGHLY-FINISHED PORTRAITS, SELECTED FROM
THE MOST AUTHENTIC SOURCES, AND ENGRAVED BY EMINENT ARTISTS.

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The Right Honorable Henry Goulton

Engraved by T. Freeman from an original painting

Printed by Macdonald, London, & sold by the Author, 10, St. Martin's Lane.





Edmund Burke

Engraved by W. G. Smith

Pubd by Messrs. Tolson & Co. Dublin & J. G. S. Anderson & Co. Bath

The proposal was embarrassing to the earl. The offer was tempting to his ambition—but he felt the doubtful and politic character of Henry's conduct: he was perplexed by scrupulous objections, and wavered for a considerable time. The letter of the king seemed scarcely to warrant the magnitude of the request—that a subject of the English crown should levy an army against a neighbouring country. Meanwhile, Dermod reiterated his offers, and with plausible amplification set them in the most attractive prominence before the thoughts of the ambitious earl. Strongbow suffered himself to be prevailed on—and entered into a contract to land in Ireland in the ensuing spring, with a large force, provided he might obtain special permission for this purpose from king Henry.

Dermod now conceived his purpose secured. To return to Ireland with the greater secrecy, he betook himself to St David's in South Wales. Here, as in Bristol, he found a friend in the church. He was received by the bishop with that ready hospitality and commiseration which his munificence had earned from the ecclesiastical orders.

Here he gained two important allies in the persons of Robert Fitz-Stephen, and his half-brother Maurice Fitz-Gerald.

Fitz-Stephen had before this been inveigled into a rebellious plot by a Welsh chief; but, on deliberation, becoming fully aware of the criminality of the undertaking, he showed so much reluctance, that the revolting chief, Rice Fitz-Griffith, had him confined to prison, where at this period he had lain for three years. He now represented to Fitz-Griffith, that the present opportunity was one which might enable him to pursue his own interests without opposing his designs. His entreaties for liberation, were seconded by the bishop and Maurice Fitz-Gerald. Fitz-Griffith yielded, and a covenant was made between Dermod and the brothers, by which they were to land with all their followers in Ireland, for the furtherance of his claims, and in return to receive from him the town of Wexford with a large adjoining tract of land.

"Such," says Leland, "was the original scheme of an invasion, which in the event proved of so much importance. An odious fugitive, driven from his province by faction and revenge, gains a few adventurers in Wales, whom youthful valour or distress of fortune, led into Ireland in hopes of some advantageous settlements. Dermod who, no doubt, encouraged his new allies by the assurance of a powerful reinforcement of his countrymen, was obliged to affect impatience to depart and to provide for their reception. He paid his vows in the church of St David, embarked, landed in Ireland, passed without discovery through the quarters of his enemies, arrived at Ferns, and was entertained and concealed in the monastery which he himself had erected: waiting impatiently for the return of spring, when the English powers were to come to his assistance."* Of this expectation, the report was industriously spread; and while it animated the flagging zeal of his friends and adherents, it made concealment, yet so necessary to his safety, impossible. The crowds who flocked to receive, from their old master, the most authentic confirmation of the news, had the dangerous effect

* Leland, i. 21.

of attracting general attention. Unable to maintain the secrecy so much to be desired, the assumption of an attitude of defiance, or at least of confidence, seemed to be the safer alternative. There was, at least, a probability that nothing very decisive could be effected by his enemies, before the arrival of the English. Under this impression, and feeling the urgency of his friends, as well as yielding to his own impulse, he assumed an attitude of defiance, and took possession of a portion of his own territories.

His enemies were too alert to allow much advantage to be drawn from this rash effort. They had been surprised by his unexpected re-appearance in the field, and were alarmed by the report of a foreign invasion. Roderic collected a force, and, with his trusty friend O'Ruark, entered the territory which had thus been seized by Dermod. The event was quickly decided. Dermod, terror-struck at the approach of his inveterate enemies, and having no adequate means of resistance, fled before their appearance, and with his little force concealed himself in the woods. Here he received encouragement from the strength of a position favourable to the action of a small party; and summoning resolution to maintain a front of opposition, he engaged in repeated skirmishes with detached parties of the enemy, in which the advantage seemed doubtful, and valuable lives were lost on both sides. This game could not, however, be long protracted against a superior power—and Dermod, with the facility of one to whom solemn engagements were as idle wind, proposed to treat, offered abject submission, but implored, in pity to fallen royalty, to be allowed to hold ten cantreds of his province, in absolute dependence on king Roderic. To give the most perfect appearance of good faith to the proposal, he offered seven hostages to the monarch, and a hundred ounces of gold to O'Ruark, for oblivion of past wrongs. His submission was accepted, on the terms which he proposed. Roderic, hurried by the pressure of his affairs in other quarters, willingly released himself from the interruption of an affair seemingly so little important, and withdrew his forces and attention from the wily traitor, on whose conduct so much depended.

Dermod, now released from the fear of his enemies, and freshly enraged by his new humiliation, may well be supposed to have indulged the anticipations of coming vengeance on the objects of his hate and fear. But he could not also repress his eager impatience at the delay of his English allies, nor avoid recollecting the caution and prudence—the waverings and coldness of manner, which had so often reduced him to despair of succour from his English acquaintance. Abandoned to suspense, he became uncontrollably impatient; and at last despatched Maurice Regan, a confidential friend and dependant, in the quality of ambassador, to hasten the coming of his allies, and if possible to increase them, by active solicitations and liberal promises.

The English knights were already advanced in their preparations. Robert Fitz-Stephen had collected his force: thirty knights, sixty men in armour, and 300 archers, chosen men, and, considering the nature of the service, in themselves a formidable power, embarked early in May, 1169,* and came to a creek called the Bann, near Wexford city.

* Leland makes it 1170—we follow Ware.

With these also came unattended, Hervey de Montmorres, as an emissary from his uncle earl Strongbow,—the object of his coming was to inspect the circumstances of the country, and estimate the prospects of success, for the information of the earl. This party sent notice of their arrival to the king of Leinster, and encamped for that night on the shore. The next morning, they were reinforced by Maurice Prendergast, a brave Welshman, who, with ten knights and 200 archers, arrived on the same landing-place.

Dermod received the summons with loud delight, and lost not an instant in hastening to meet them. The next evening he encamped with them at the sea-side, and the following day they marched to Wexford, a distance of twelve miles. On their way, they were joined by Dermod's illegitimate son, Donald Kavanagh, with 500 Irishmen. On their arrival at the suburbs of the city, they were encountered by a party of "about 2000 of the inhabitants." The inhabitants of Wexford were descendants of the united races of Danes and Irish, but chiefly perhaps of Danish blood. These brave men, in their first impulse, had little calculated the terrific odds which they should have to encounter in the small but highly-trained band, which now menaced their city and native land. The glittering mail and marshalled array of Norman valour and discipline, must have presented a spectacle of imposing novelty to their unaccustomed eyes. Their shrewdness was not slow to draw correct inferences from the splendid but portentous array which stood before their walls in the stern repose of military discipline and valour—and having for a moment wavered, they changed their resolution, and, setting fire to the suburbs, they retired hastily within their walls. Fitz-Stephen lost no time in pressing the advantage of their panic, and led up his force to the assault. The garrison recovered from their momentary panic, and made a defence worthy of a more fortunate result. The enemy was for a moment repulsed with the loss of eighteen men. This loss enraged the high-spirited English, and surprised their Irish allies. Fitz-Stephen was, however, resolved to leave no refuge for retreat: before he renewed the assault, he led his party to the shore, and set fire to the transports in which they had arrived two days before. The next morning, having ordered divine service in the camp, after it was performed with due solemnity, he drew up his force with doubled circumspection and care. His little party was wrought into a high impatience of their recent disgrace, and each man resolved to conquer or die in his rank.

To this result, however, matters were not allowed to come. The English, though resolved, had received from failure a lesson of caution; and the besieged were little encouraged by a success which was nothing more than an escape from a stronger foe. They had hitherto been accustomed to see battles decided by the effect of a single onset, and were less daunted by the prowess which their new enemies had shown the day before, than by the stern composure with which they now took their position before the walls—like men more determined on the event. There was in consequence much hesitation, and a divided feeling within the walls; and while many urged steps of resistance, others, more wise or timid, proposed overtures of peace. Among these latter the clergy, friendly to the cause of Dermod, and taught to ex-

pect, from the success of the English, many advantages and immunities, were more particularly on the alert. The result was a flag of truce to the besiegers, who received and accepted from the city an offer of surrender, with a return to its allegiance to king Dermot. These proposals seemed reasonable to all. The jealousy and vindictive animosity of Dermot himself remained unappeased, and three days passed in superfluous negotiation. By the influence, however, both of his English allies and the clergy, all was smoothed; and Dermot, to show his faithfulness and honour to the English, without delay fulfilled his promises to Fitz-Stephen and Fitz-Gerald, by granting them the lordship of the city, with two cantreds of adjoining territory. And to oblige earl Richard, he bestowed on Hervey de Montmorres two cantreds lying between Wexford and Waterford. These three English knights were therefore the first of the British settlers in Ireland.*

From Wexford king Dermot led his allies to his town of Ferns, where the soldiers were rested, and the knights feasted for three weeks. There was, meanwhile, a full concourse of his repentant subjects coming in to the king from every quarter of the province. The capture of Wexford, and the presence of the English, diffused a general sense of the inutility and danger of further disaffection from the royal cause, and, with few exceptions, restored the province to its allegiance. Dermot was thus enabled to add considerably to his force, and to maintain, in the presence of his English friends, an appearance of authority and power more in accordance with his pride and royal pretensions. The utmost allowance having been now made for rest and preparation, some further advance was to be made; and in this Dermot was decided as much by personal enmity as by policy. Donald Magilla Patrick, the prince of Ossory, had not only revolted to his enemy, the king of Connaught, but having obtained possession of the person of his only legitimate son, either as a hostage or a visitor, on some jealous pretence had him seized and ordered his eyes to be torn out—under the operation of which cruel order the young prince had expired. Dermot's implacable resentment was now consulted by an immediate advance into the district of Ossory. The terror of the English arms had travelled before them, and the report of their approach spread consternation through Ossory. But the brave prince, Donald, only thought of his duty and interest; and, collecting his best force, resolutely prepared for the formidable invader. Having marched to the frontier of his province at the head of five thousand men, he took up a strong and seemingly impregnable position among the defiles of the woods and the natural entrenchment of a vast and intricate morass; and there disposing his forces to the utmost advantage, undauntedly awaited the enemy. The enemy was soon at hand, and but imperfectly aware of the real dangers they had to encounter. Their onset

* On this event Mr Moore observes, "This tract of country is now comprised in the baronies of Forth and Bargie, and it is not a little remarkable, that the descendants of its first settlers remained, for ages, a community distinct, in language and manners, from the natives. Even to a recent period, a dialect has continued in use among them, peculiar to these baronies, and which, judging from the written specimens that remain of it, bore a close affinity to the Anglo-Saxon."—*Hist. ii.* 216.

was violent, and, on firm ground, would have borne down all thought of resistance. But the Ossorians, secure in their quagmires against the floundering charges of their antagonists, sustained their violence with surprising firmness. The circumstance, however, threw these brave men off their guard; in the heat of the fray, and triumphing in successful resistance, they overlooked the secret of their strength, and suffered their native ardour to impel them rashly forward to the firm and equal plain, whither the more trained and deliberate tactics of the Anglo-Norman foe retreated for the purpose of leading them into this fatal error. With a steady precision, only to be attained by the most perfect discipline, the English turned in their seeming flight, and charged with resistless power on the triumphing and tumultuary Ossorians, who were scattered with dreadful slaughter back, until they once more reached the security of their marshy fortifications. Here they were secure; and the English, in their turn, carried forward in the confusion of pursuit, insensibly involved themselves among the marshy defiles, where it was impossible for heavy cavalry to act or even move without imminent danger. Dermot, more experienced in the localities, or probably informed by the natives of his own party, quickly apprised his allies of their danger. The Ossorians soon became aware of the same circumstance; and, thinking the invader within their power, began to re-assemble with a courage that was perceived by their countrymen in the opposite ranks. These also were now alarmed by the motions of their English allies, which, in their ignorance of disciplined warfare, they attributed to fear. Under this misapprehension, they now separated themselves from a body who, they said, could run like the wind; and Dermot, seeing their movement, was led to fear that the Wexford men were about to change sides and go over to the Ossorians. In the meantime, the English knights calmly took the necessary steps to repair the error of their position. Repeating their former evolution, they assumed the appearance of a confused and hurried retreat; which, again exciting the ardour of the Ossorians, they were still more tumultuously pursued. Placing a small ambush behind a grove by which they passed, they gained the firm fields; and, securing sufficient room for their purpose, a second time they wheeled short upon their unwary pursuers, who were instantly turned into a confused flight,—and, being intercepted by the ambush that had been placed between them and the morass, sustained a severe slaughter. In this the troops of Dermot joined; and the men of Wexford, decided by the fortune of the day, were not slow in lending the assistance which they would as readily have lent to the Ossorians, had the victory been on their side. A rapid flight soon terminated the slaughter, but not before three hundred of the men of Ossory were slain, whose heads were collected and brought by his soldiers as a grateful offering to the animosity of king Dermot. Dermot, in whose mind vindictive passions seem to have been more strong than policy or ambition, received them with a transport which, in the description of *Cambrensis*, suggests the image of a fiend rather than a man. Passionately clasping his hands, he dared to thank heaven for the grateful sight; and, deliberately examining the bleeding heads, and turning them over one by one, revelled in the

gratification of demoniac vengeance. At length the savage, discovering in the bleeding heap the features of a well known face, with a frenzied eagerness drew it forth; and, to the disgust and consternation of the surrounding circle of Irish, fastened his teeth on the unconscious and ghastly visage of his Ossorian foe. This shocking story is omitted in the summary narrative of his servant, Regan. The different historians, who repeat it from Cambrensis, manifest more or less disinclination to receive it without qualification. None, however, reject it; and, we must confess that, considering it to be too obviously in harmony with the whole of Dermot's character, we have suppressed our strong dislike to repeat a tale so revolting to every sense of humanity.

The English leaders proposed to retain possession of the field, and to follow up the victory they had obtained, by the complete reduction of Donald's power in Ossory. Without this, the victory was but a useless waste of life, and they were also liable to be harassed in their return by pursuit. Such was the obvious suggestion of policy and prudence. But to king Dermot policy and prudence were but secondary; and he had supped full on the horrors of revenge. He had defeated and triumphed, burnt, despoiled, and wasted; and was now desirous of an interval of rest, and the secure triumph and feasting of his kingly seat at Ferns. Thither, in spite of remonstrance, he led back his force; and there he was, as he must have expected, attended by a fresh concourse of submissive vassals, who congratulated him on his returning prosperity, and renewed the faith for which it was his only security.

From Ferns he made several incursions against such of the lesser chiefs as still held out. But the prince of Ossory, having nothing to expect from submission to one whose hostility was personal, and, perhaps collecting "resolution from despair," was, in the meantime, preparing for a more desperate effort of resistance. Having entered more fully into the detail of the first engagement with the army of Donald, it may be felt the less necessary to dwell on the particulars of the next. Donald fortified himself with a strong entrenchment and palisade of wooden stakes upon the path of his enemy. On this the valour and resources of the native forces of Dermot were, for three days, allowed to exhaust themselves in vain assaults; the English, waiting for a fair occasion, ended the tumultuary conflict by one decisive charge, which carried the entrenchment and won the day. Dermot's mind, submissive and fawning in adversity, was now, with characteristic consistency, rendered overbearing and insolent by success. He began to feel himself a king, and the dispenser of slight and favour among those who followed his standard; and, though a sense of prudence repressed his overbearing temper, where he knew its indulgence must be unsafe, yet he could not so far repress his insolence as to avoid giving frequent offence to persons who probably saw through and despised the baseness of his character. Those whose services he had retained by strong pledges of interest, might be expected to smile in secret scorn at the slight or flattery, which they valued alike at their proper worth. Maurice de Prendergast, however, bound by no compact and recompensed by no stipulated reward, now began to feel that his service was treated with neglect, and that

his repeated solicitations and remonstrances were met by an insolent attempt to undervalue his alliance: his patience was at last wearied, and he showed some disposition to abandon one who thus repaid his services with slight. The Wexford men, strongly disaffected to Dermot, saw and encouraged this inclination, which they strengthened by their artful representations, and easily converted into a resolution to join the prince of Ossory.

This incident revived the courage of Donald, and made him determine on assuming the offensive, and attempting an incursion into the territories of king Dermot. Prendergast, more sensible of the inadequacy of any force he could command for such a purpose, dissuaded him from the vain effort. This was the more necessary, as a fresh arrival from England had now repaired the loss occasioned by his defection.

Prendergast soon discovered the error of the step he had taken. He received information that there was a secret design, the intent of which was first to secure his service, and then repay it by taking the lives of himself and his small party,* and he resolved to retire to Wales. Donald remonstrated to no purpose, and then determined to have recourse to violence. "The men of Ossory," writes Regan, "persevering in their malicious treason against Prendergast, assembled two thousand men together, plashed a place through which he was to pass; whereof, by good fortune, Maurice having intelligence, acquainted his companie with the danger. After mature deliberacione, it was resolved, that no knowledge shuld be takin of the intended treason, and to make stay in Kilkenny for a few days, and in the meanwhile to send messengers to Donald's seneschall, to lett hym knowe, that they were contented to serve the kyng of Ossory, if it pleased hym, half a year, or a quarter longer, which offer Donald gladlie accepted. The Ossorians, hearinge that Maurice had made a new agreement with the kyng, abandoned the place where they lodged. Maurice hearinge that they wer dislodged, about midnight rose out of Kilkenny, and continued upon a swift march until he came to Waterford, where they founds mean to imbarque themselves for Wales, but not without some difficultie, for one of the English had slain a cittizen whyche enraged the people, but Maurice Prendergast by his wisdome appeased the tumult."[†]

The first landing of the English, and the events which immediately followed, were not so far different from the ordinary feuds and provincial wars of a country, which seems to have been the home of perpetual discord, as to be at first very clearly traceable to their results. But Roderic, who from the beginning felt his private interests menaced by the success of his known enemy, the king of Leinster, now began to perceive that his monarchy was likely to be endangered by the course of events. This he was not left to infer. Dermot, in the highflown insolence of conscious power, now avowed his pretensions to the king-

* The character of Donald is not implicated in this design. Maurice Regan, from whose fragment this memoir is drawn, adds, "but Donald would by no means assent to that."

† Regan.

dom. The honour of Roderic was also pledged to the vindication of the rights of his faithful partisan, the chief of Ossory. Under these motives, he resolved to make those vigorous efforts which, when impartially viewed and referred to their real objects and the actual spirit of that age, carry with them all the heroism, though not the romance, of national valour. He summoned his tributaries, and raised his standard at Tara, where he reviewed his assembled forces; from thence he led them to Dublin. Here, we learn from the ancient annals of the country, he found in this vast national force symptoms of weakness, enough to convince him that there was little or no hope of any proportional result. Many were likely to betray him for the promotion of their private views—some from envy—some from resentment of former wrongs—some from fear of an enemy, of whose deeds they had perhaps received inflated descriptions—every disposition was shown to thwart his measures; and all the ordinary and easily-distinguished symptoms were perceptible, of that disaffection which, if it find no opening for a traitor's blow, is sure to take the first cross-road to part company. Roderic had long been aware of the fact, that many of the assembled chiefs were in secret the adherents of the rival house of Hy-Niall. Acting on suspicions, the grounds of which could not be mistaken, Roderic dismissed his northern tributaries on the ostensible grounds, that the occasion did not warrant so considerable a force. His own troops, with those of O'Ruark, Thomond, and a few of Dermot's disaffected tributaries, he retained—a force, numerically taken, far superior to those he should have to meet; yet when the vast preponderance of discipline, arms, and continued success are weighed, far insufficient to give confidence to a mind not under the influence of infatuation.

Roderic nevertheless acted with vigour and a steady and deliberate sagacity, which made the most of the circumstances. He saw demonstrations on the part of the enemy, which indicated apprehensions of the event, and he resolved to avail himself of a seeming strength, the weakness of which he too well understood.

In the mean time Dermot, easily elated by success, and yielding with equal proneness to dejection, communicated to Fitz-Stephen his unmanly fears. These the steady courage of Fitz-Stephen repelled. He told the feeble chief, that "a brave leader should not only show personal valour in the field, but preserve that steady resolution which can brave the extremities of reverse. That true courage, unaffected by fortune, was always ready to meet and obviate the most trying perils with composure and the resources of a collected mind. At worst, a glorious death was the last resource of an undaunted spirit." With these and such remonstrances, in which he most justly expressed the character of his own steady and heroic spirit, Fitz-Stephen vainly endeavoured to communicate heroism to the feeble and abject Dermot, who, though personally courageous, was utterly devoid of the spirit which was thus appealed to. It was, therefore, the next essential consideration to take the most immediate measures for the defensive course, which, although prompted by timidity, was not without its recommendation to the cautious prudence which governed all the movements of the English. The English retired to Ferns, and entrenched

themselves in an inaccessible position among thick impervious wood, and deep morasses. Here they quietly awaited the approach of Roderic.

Roderic surmised the advantages, and saw the difficulties which these circumstances appeared to offer. While the strength of the position of the English made assault ridiculous, it yet implied a sense of weakness. There was a seeming opportunity to avert the menaced calamity by wary policy while the risk of war was at best but doubtful. He resolved to proceed by remonstrance and persuasion, and communicating with Fitz-Stephen, exposed the injustice of the cause, and the unworthiness of the person to whom he had prostituted English valour. Fitz-Stephen readily penetrated the true policy of these overtures, and concluded that conscious weakness alone would, under the circumstances, have dictated them. He knew the real frailty of the brave monarch's best resources, and could not resolve either to abandon his own fortunes, or be false to his plighted engagements, and he at once rejected the offers and reasoning of Roderic. The conclusion of his letter is curious for its characteristic and quaint significance. "To what end is your embassy? If Rotherick give council, we need it not; if he prophesie, we credit not his oracle; if he command as a prince, we obey not his authority; if he threaten as an enemy, a fig for his monarchy."

Roderic next appealed to the fears of Dermot, who, now supported by the courage and decision of his brave allies, rejected his overtures with equal resolution. He then prepared for a vigorous effort against the English, which, in the opinion of Leland "might have confounded all their expectations, deterred their countrymen from any like attempts, and prevented the momentous consequences of this apparently insignificant invasion. The future fate of Ireland hung on this critical moment, and it was at once decided, for Roderic listened to the suggestions of his clergy, and rather than hazard an engagement, consented to treat with a prince whose perfidy he had already experienced." Such is the representation of the most impartial and moderate historian that Ireland has yet produced. But it abounds with manifest inconsequences. The "critical moment," though it brings the event, does not as necessarily bring with it the efficient resource. Nor, if it be admitted that Roderic's entering into a compromise on that occasion carried with it fatal consequences, can it with equal reason be insisted on, that he had the choice of any other course. So far as his own immediate acts admit of inference, it was his rash design to attempt the forcing of the position of his enemy; and there can be no doubt that he would have in this but consulted the dictates of policy and resentment. It did not require a prophetic anticipation of "seven centuries" to come, or of vague sensations of national impressions yet unborn, to stimulate a breast affected by far other and far nearer passions. It was the fate of Roderic to stand at the helm when the tempest was too strong for mortal hand; no prudence or courage could have withstood the adverse concurrence of circumstances with which he had to contend; and it seems to us surprising, with what flippant facility writers of great general fairness allow their pens to glide unthinkingly into reflec-

tions, the absurdity of which is exposed by nearly all the details of the statement to which they are appended. There is no extraordinary difficulty in the correct appreciation of the difficulties of Roderic's situation. The vast inequality of real military force may be omitted—from that at least he never shrunk; but he had, in fact, no power at his command: his army was a mere pageant, his chiefs were only to be leagued by their private objects, and were, if these required, far more willing to combine against their monarch, than to follow him in a common cause. The common interest was little known—there was no community of feeling, or if such had existence, it was lost in the eager strifes and contentions of provincial politics. Provincial feuds and jealousies—the disaffection of many—the fears of some—the disunion of all, imperfectly traced in the meagre records of that dark age, appear to the modern historian as dim shadows in the distance of time, which he may notice or not, just as he is inclined to colour actions which have derived their chief importance from after events. It is indeed easy for modern patriotism to play its graceful harlequinade on the tombs of those who, in that deep, anxious, and fatal conflict (if they will have it fatal), were the anxious and deeply interested actors; and who, without being deficient in courage or earnestness in *their own concerns*, were governed by fatal and unquerable influences now imperfectly conceived. The disunion of the chiefs of the country may be truly set down as fatal to the cause of resistance; but this was their essential characteristic—the idiosyncrasy of the land.

Roderic arrayed his forces for the storm; and he endeavoured to awaken the ardour of his followers by an address well adapted to rouse their patriotism and courage. He represented the injustice of Dermot's aim, and the crimes of his life. He pointed out the dangers likely to follow from the power of the new comers; adverted to former instances of similar effects, and cited examples of similar dangers averted by brave resistance. "While these strangers are but few in number," he concluded, "let us stoutly issue out upon them. The fire, while it is but in embers and sparkles, may easily be covered with ashes, but if it break into flames, it is hard to be quenched.... Wherefore, cheer my hearts, we fight for our country and liberty; let us leave unto our posterity an immortal fame; let us press on and lustily assault them, that the overthrow of a few may be a terror to many; and that it may be a warning to all future potentates not to attempt the like again." Such was the bold and specious rhetoric, which the brave monarch directed to most reluctant hearers. The real difficulties, and the true dangers of action, were as apparent to his chiefs as they were to his own sagacity; they were not, like him, impelled by the powerful sense of having fame and dominions at the hazard. The clergy—by profession the advocates of peace, and by interest concerned to protract a contest by the result of which they were likely to be gainers—were active in influencing the minds of his camp, as well as his own. He soon perceived that an effective attack was hopeless—that the consequence of defeat must be ruin. The alternative was a matter of necessity as well as prudence, and he chose

it: unable to resist effectively, he resolved to temporize. New proposals were offered to the king of Leinster; and by the mediation of the clergy, after some time, a treaty was concluded, in which every thing was conceded that Roderic had a right to demand. Dermot consented to acknowledge his supremacy, and to pay him the usual service of a subject prince—giving up his son as a hostage. A secret article secured the more general object of Roderic, and showed the perfidy of Dermot: he engaged, on the reduction of Leinster, to dismiss his English allies; and, it is added by historians, resolved to observe this treaty no longer than might suit his purposes.

He was now at liberty to pursue, undisturbed, his schemes of vengeance and aggrandizement. Dublin was selected as the first object of attack. This city was chiefly inhabited by Ostmen, who were at this time the chief commercial inhabitants of the country. These foreigners sate loosely from the sway of the native kings, which they resisted or acquiesced in as circumstances rendered expedient. Dermot bore them especial hate for the spirit with which they had frequently repelled his aggressions. Nor was his dislike without a more especial cause. His father had so irritated them by oppression, that when they caught him within their walls, they slew and buried him with a dead dog. They from that time revolted and acknowledged no government but that of their countryman, Hesculph Mac Torcal. Fitz-Stephen was at this time detained near Wexford, by the necessity of erecting a fort for the security of his own possessions. Dermot, with his Irish, and the remainder of his British allies, advanced into the territory of Dublin, which he laid waste with slaughter and conflagration, till the terrified citizens were forced to appease him by a prompt submission, which, at the instance of Fitz-Gerald, was accepted.

It would be tedious and unprofitable to enter on all the minor changes and events which led to no apparent result of any interest, in a work not directly pretending to a historical character, beyond what its professed object demands. Dermot, now fully reinstated in his power, might have allowed the disturbances he had raised to settle into comparative calm. The English would gladly have availed themselves of the peaceful possession they might have been allowed quietly to retain; their English countrymen showed no eagerness to join them; and king Henry, if under these assumptions he would have found inducement to come over, would have met the shadow of submission, and the proffer of free allegiance, which must have left things pretty nearly as they were. The arbitrement of war alone could transfer the rights of the native chiefs, and afford the sanction of necessity for the further oppressions which are the sure followers of continual strife. But Dermot's views, expanded by the elevation of confirmed power, consulted only his inflamed ambition, and the unremitting vengeance of his heart. Another step lay before him—too easy to be deferred—which must place his foot on the neck of Roderic, his ancient and hated foe. He represented to his British allies the justice of his right, the wealth and magnificence of the prize. The dominions of Connaught, he said, would afford the richest and fairest settlements to those who should assist him in recovering the possession which had been wrongfully

usurped from his family. The English yielded to his reiterated persuasions, but strongly insisted that their force was insufficient for an undertaking of such magnitude. They urged his strenuous efforts to gain additional assistance from England, as the only sure support against all impediment and resistance. By their advice, he renewed his application to earl Strongbow, who possessed the means to lead over a sufficient force to effect the purpose.

Earl Strongbow, fully apprised of the advantages he might hope for from compliance with the repeated invitations and offers of Dermot, was embarrassed by the necessity of obtaining leave from king Henry. Henry was reluctant to permit private adventure to advance too far without his own co-operation; it was indeed well to have the pretext raised, and the way securely tried; but the gradual occupation of the country by adventurers, by no means squared with the views of this ambitious and far-seeing monarch. A consent so ambiguous as to admit of question when expediency might require, was the most that earl Richard could obtain; but it was enough for a will ready to precipitate itself on its object: the earl departed, with the resolution to understand the king according to his own purpose.

The season retarded his operations for some months. But he employed the interval effectively, and completed his preparation against the spring. He now sent Raymond le Gros, the near kinsman of Fitz-Stephen and Fitz-Gerald, as an advanced guard, with a force of ten knights and seventy archers, accompanied by Hervey of Montmorres, who had returned to Wales, and now returned with a small train. This company landed near Waterford, at Dundolf.*

Here they secured themselves with a sufficient entrenchment. As soon as their landing was known, there was a tumultuary muster of the men of Waterford and Ossory, who marched against them; these were joined by Mac Kelan of Offelan, and O'Rian of Odrone. The company of Raymond did not exceed an hundred men. He had collected into his little fortification all the cows in the surrounding districts; and seeing the besiegers too numerous to be attacked without much unnecessary risk, at the same time resolving not to endure the inconveniences of a lingering siege, he hit on a device which, considering the irregular character of the besiegers, was not ill-judged. While the men of Waterford and their allies, to the number of many thousands, were deliberating on the most effectual means of securing the handful of adventurers which fortune seemed to have placed within their grasp, of a sudden the gates of the little fortress expanded, and a frightened herd of black cattle rushed forth with hoof and horn, and burst with resistless impetuosity on the disorderly multitude. The undisciplined ranks scattered on every side in that confusion and disarray which, of itself, is enough to carry terror to the fiercest hearts. Before the first effects of this disorder could subside, while all were yet scattered in the wild tumult of dismay, a still fiercer enemy was among them—Raymond and his thirty knights were spreading wide avenues of slaughter among the unresisting kernes. A thousand were slain, and

* Downdonnel. Regan.

seventy taken prisoners. But the victory of Raymond was sullied by cruelty. In the fray he had lost a dear friend, and in his fury he ordered all his prisoners to be put to death.*

While Raymond le Gros yet continued in his fort at Dundonnel, earl Strongbow, embarking at Milford, August 1170, on St Bartholomew's eve, arrived in the bay of Waterford with fifteen or sixteen hundred troops, among whom, we learn from Cambrensis, were two hundred knights, and at once resolved on the siege of that city, which was at this time governed by Reginald and Smorth, two petty Danish chiefs. Strongbow's first step was probably the sending for king Dermot, but Regan and Cambrensis differ as to the period of his arrival; the first, with whom we are inclined to concur, making it to have taken place before, the latter after, the taking of the city. Another difference here occurs between our authorities—Cambrensis giving the command of the assault to Raymond, who, by the silence of Regan, would seem to have had no share in this affair. Omitting the consideration of this difference, the siege of Waterford was begun on the following day. After meeting some severe repulses from the walls, a house was noticed which projected over an angle of the wall, and was supported by props from the outside. By cutting down the props, the house came to the ground, and left a breach through which the besiegers poured into the town. Resistance was of course at an end, and a fearful slaughter was interrupted by the humane interposition of king Dermot, whose dark history seems brightened with this sole redeeming gleam of beneficence. Immediately on the cessation of the tumult and terror of the recent siege, the nuptials of Strongbow and Eva were solemnized in Waterford.

It was now agreed, between Dermot and his son-in-law, to march against Dublin, which had recently shown strong signs of returning disaffection, and against which also the wrathful enmity of Dermot had not yet been satisfied. With this resolution they went to Ferns, to remain until the completion of the necessary preparations. They were, in the mean time, apprised that Roderic had succeeded in raising a levy of thirty thousand men to intercept their approach to Dublin; and that, with this view, he had "plashed and trenched all the places through which the earl and Dermot must have passed."†

There was no result decisive enough for this narrative. The exhibition of the invading force, now swelled to upwards of four thousand English, was fully sufficient to convince the leaders of the native force of the utter absurdity of an attack, which, from the open line of march sagaciously chosen by Strongbow, should have been made without those advantages of defile and morass, without which every such attempt had hitherto failed. After three days of desultory skirmish, in which they became confirmed in this opinion, they compelled their disappointed leader to dismiss them. Roderic, who must himself have felt the just-

* Such is the account of Regan. Cambrensis represents the circumstance differently, and Leland gives weight to his statement by adopting it. According to this account, Raymond pleaded for the prisoners, who offered their ransom; but the arguments of Hervey prevailed for their death.

† Regan.

ness, went home to mature more extensive preparations, and to secure more trusty allies.

Dublin was soon invested by Dermod and the English; and Maurice Regan, the writer of the narrative from which this memoir is chiefly drawn, was sent to summon the city to surrender, and to demand hostages for its fidelity. The citizens could not agree, and the treaty was interrupted: the time assigned for it was spent in vain altercations, until Miles de Cogan, who was stationed at a more assailable point, without consulting the earl, gave the signal for attack; the citizens, who were expecting a treaty, were surprised by the sight of the enemy pouring into their streets in the fury of a successful assault. It is needless to multiply the details of slaughter and devastation. Lawrence O'Toole, the archbishop of Dublin, did honour to his humanity and patriotism on this occasion, by the energy of his exertions for the rescue of his fellow-citizens; throwing himself between the heated conquerors and their trembling victims, he denounced, entreated, persuaded, intercepted the blows, and dragged the prostrate citizens from beneath the very swords of the assailants.

Earl Strongbow was now invested with the lordship of Dublin, and appointed De Cogan his governor.

From Dublin, the confederates marched into Meath, where they committed the most furious devastations; the result of which was a message from Roderic, who had not yet acquired sufficient strength to take the field, commanding Dermod, as his subject, to retire. He was reminded that he had been allowed to recover his territories according to a treaty, the stipulations of which he had violated by continuing to employ foreigners in the oppression of the kingdom; and that, unless he would immediately return to the observance of his engagements, it would become necessary to visit his obstinacy on the life of his son, who was the hostage for his faith. Dermod, who was devoid of natural affection, was content to sacrifice paternal duty to ambition, and sent back a scornful and irritating answer. He re-asserted his claim to the dominion of Connaught, and professed his intention not to lay down his arms until he should have established his right. His son was the victim of his faithlessness and the barbarism of the time.

Dermod, immoderately elevated by his successes, now ventured to try his force by leading an army of his own troops into the territory of his ancient enemy, O'Ruark; and, in consequence, he met with the deserved penalty of his rashness in two successive defeats. This is the last adventure, of any importance, in which he seems to have been personally engaged.

His death, in the following winter, threw a temporary damp on the spirit of his adventurous allies. The Irish annalists, in their natural dislike to the memory of one whom they represent as the first who shook the prosperity of his country, attribute his death to the immediate stroke of Divine retribution, granted to the intercession of all the Irish saints. According to these records, Dermod died of a lingering and offensive disease, which drove from his agitated and despairing couch the last consolations and tender offices of his kindred and servants. His death took place at his residence in Ferns, in

the month of May; on which event, the succession to his kingdom of Leinster devolved, both by inheritance and treaty, on Strongbow.

Earl Strongbow.

DIED A. D. 1177.

RICHARD DE CLARE, third earl of Pembroke, earl of Strigul, lord of Chepstow in England, earl of Ogir in Normandy, &c., &c., prince of Leinster in right of his wife, and lord-lieutenant of Ireland under Henry II., bore the surname of Strongbow, by which he is familiarly designated, from his father, Gilbert, who obtained it for his remarkable skill in archery. At the time of king Dermot's flight into England, Strongbow was out of favour with king Henry; his estate had been wasted by dissipation, and being yet not past the prime of his life, he was, by disposition as well as from circumstances, prepared to throw himself upon any course which might employ his valour and repair his fortunes.

Accordingly, he applied to king Henry on that occasion, for permission to embark in the undertaking proposed by the fugitive king of Leinster; and, as we have related in our memoir of king Dermot, received an ambiguous answer, the design of which he probably understood, and construed according to his own purpose. He nevertheless had the precaution to defer the execution of his design, until the event of Fitz-Stephen's expedition might offer some decided estimate of the chances of success. It is also probable that he found some difficulties arising from the impoverished condition of his finances.

At length, affairs in Ireland having taken the course already stated, in August, 1170, when all was ready for embarkation at Milford, he had the vexation of receiving from king Henry a peremptory message, forbidding the projected enterprise, on pain of the forfeiture of his possessions and honours. It is probable that Strongbow had not much to lose, and it is certain that his expectations were at the highest point; he felt that the splendid success for which he hoped might well enable him to appease the politic anger of the king, perhaps to defy his power, surrounded as Henry was by other cares likely to fill his hands for a long time. He had gone too far to recede without dishonour; and, having resolved to brave all consequences, he affected to doubt the purport, and question the authority of the royal mandate; so, dismissing all further consideration, he embarked and came, on the eve of St Bartholomew, into the port of Waterford.

On the capture of Waterford, he married Eva, daughter to the king of Leinster; and, having passed some days at Ferns, he assisted at the siege of Dublin, as already mentioned, and was invested by his father-in-law with the lordship of that city. From this there is no occurrence important enough to be repeated from the former memoir, until the death of king Dermot, from which we again meet the onward progress of the events in Strongbow's life.

Immediately previous to king Dermot's death, the English adventurers were much depressed in their hopes by an edict published by

king Henry, prohibiting the transportation of men, arms, or provisions to Ireland from any English or Welsh port; and, on pain of attainder and forfeiture, commanding all English subjects, of every order and degree, to return home before the ensuing feast of Easter. Strongbow, who knew the character and policy of Henry, immediately despatched his trusty friend, Raymond le Gros, to Aquitaine, where Henry then resided. Raymond made such excuses on the part of Strongbow, as most probably satisfied the king; but, thinking it necessary to repress and retard the progress of the adventurers until he should himself have leisure to follow up the conquest of Ireland, he gave no distinct answer to the reiterated solicitations of Raymond, whom he thus detained from day to day, until an incident occurred which, for a season, so wholly engrossed his mind as to prevent the consideration of any other affair of moment. This was the murder of Becket, which involved his peace of mind, and hazarded even the safety of his throne, in a most hapless contest with his people, clergy, and the court of Rome.

In this interval the affairs of Strongbow and his fellow-adventurers bore a most unpromising aspect; and Dermot's death, in the midst of their trouble, came to heighten their perplexity. On this occurrence, the native Irish fell away from them, with the exception of Donald Kavanagh (Dermot's illegitimate son), Awliffe O'Carry, and Mac-Gely, chief of Firbrynn.

This gloomy aspect of affairs was quickly interrupted by a torrent of dangers, which accumulated around them with a rapidity and power that menaced inevitable ruin. First, they were surprised by the unexpected return of the Danish governor, Hesculf, with a powerful body of Ostmen, which he had levied among the Scottish isles. Strongbow was, at this time, absent at Waterford, and had left the city under the command of Miles de Cogan.

The Ostmen had landed, without opposition, under their captain, John Wood; they were all selected and trained soldiers, and armed "after the Danish manner, with good brigantines, jackes, and shirts of mail; their shields, bucklers, and targets, were round and coloured red, and bound about with iron; and, as they were in arms, so they were in minds, iron-strong and mighty."* This formidable force, having landed from sixty transports, marched direct against the eastern gate of the city. The attack was impetuous, and found no proportionate force to resist it. De Cogan was taken by surprise; yet the natural steadiness of English soldiers offered resistance enough to protract, for a considerable time, the violent and sanguinary struggle which heaped the gate with dead; so that, when his force, thinned by the fall of numbers, were on the point of being overpowered by the superior force of the Danish troops, time had been secured for a manœuvre which turned the fortune of the fight. Richard, brother to De Cogan, issued with a select party from the southern gate of the city; and, coming round to the quarter of assault, charged the rear of the besieging army. The effect was not so decided as at once to end the struggle; their numbers were still too formidably over-balanced by the be-

* Giraldus.

siegers. It, however, so far threw them into disorder, that the efforts of the English became more decisive, and their superiority of firmness and discipline began to tell with redoubled effect, so that the confusion of the besiegers, momentarily increasing, ended at last in a headlong flight. The English were now joined by some Irish allies, of whose disposition they had been hitherto doubtful, and the Ostmen were pursued with great slaughter to their ships. Wood was slain. Hesculf was taken. It was first decided to hold him to ransom; but he imprudently boasted of the extent of his preparations for the next attack, and of his resolution, before long, to crush the power of his captors; and this perilous bravado cost him his life.

But a trial still more severe was yet to be encountered. In the general supineness of the Irish chiefs—altogether devoid of all ideas of a national cause, and only alive to the call of their separate petty interests—one chief alone was, by the accident of his more extended interests, awake to the dangers which menaced the foundations of his monarchy. Roderic—ill seconded by any corresponding sense on the part of his chiefs, of whom the greater number were ready, at any moment, to desert or oppose him for the slightest object, whether of fear or gain—was yet ever on the watch for the moment of advantage against his Norman foes. He had fully learned the vanity of all expectation from the result of any resistance, less than that of an overwhelming national force; he was now aware of the juncture of circumstances, which promised to cut off all further aid from the English, who were thinned in numbers, and nearly destitute of supplies; and he resolved to avail himself of the occasion.

He was nobly seconded by Lawrence O'Toole, the archbishop of Dublin, whose assistance was rendered effective by the commanding influence of his talents and virtues. He hastened from province to province, roused the spirit, and awakened the fears of the divided chiefs. He solicited and obtained the powerful alliance of Gotred, king of Man, who came with thirty vessels into the harbour of Dublin, which they placed under blockade. The confederacy, thus excited, seemed for the first time equal to the emergency. Roderic, with his provincial force, encamped at Castleknock; O'Ruark and O'Carrol at Clontarf; O'Kinsellagh occupied the opposite shore; the chief of Thomond took his position at Kilmainham; Lawrence himself took arms and headed his troop. This formidable armament was perhaps more to be dreaded from the mere consequences of its *vis inertiae*, than from any active exertion of its power of offence; it was divided by separate commands, and still more by the diffusion of a spirit of private jealousy; most of its chiefs entertaining more dislikes and fears of one another, than hostility to the common enemy.

The besieged, for two months enclosed by this seemingly formidable alliance, were reduced to difficulties of the severest kind. The dearth of provisions increased daily; the men grew distempered, and lost their spirits and vigour; a little further protraction of their present condition would have left nothing for the enemy to effect. Their misery was aggravated by an account of the distress of Fitz-Stephen, who lay in the utmost danger of being seized by the people of Wexford.

Strongbow called a council.* It was agreed that their situation was too desperate for further resistance, and they resolved to treat with Roderic on any fair and honourable terms. The speech attributed by Regan to Strongbow, may be cited as descriptive of the circumstances:—"You see with what forces our enemies besiege us; we have not victuals to suffice us longer than fifteen days; a measure of wheat is now sold for a marke, of barley for half a marke; wherefore I think it best that we presently send to the king of Connaught to tell him, that if he will rise and depart from the siege, I will submit myself to him, and be his man, and hold Leinster of him; and I am of opinion that Lawrence, the archbishop of *Dublin*, is the meetest man to negotiate this business." Lawrence was applied to, and willingly engaged to bear the proposal of the earl to Roderic; but soon returned with an answer, of which some writers suspect him to have been the framer. The supposition implies a baseness which we cannot credit, notwithstanding the low morality of the age; and we think the answer more likely to have come from Roderic, of whose position it was the natural suggestion. Lawrence entered the council of the English with the stern composure of his character, and delivered, with firmness, an answer which he may honestly have approved. It was this:—"That all the forts held by the English should be immediately surrendered to Roderic, and that the English should depart before an appointed day, and leave the country henceforth free from their claims and usurpations; on refusal of which, Roderic threatened to assault the city, "making no doubt to carry it by force." This proud answer amazed the earl and his council: they sat for some moments silent and perplexed. At last Miles de Cogan started up and advised an immediate sally, himself offering to be the leader. The proposal was received with acclamation, and they immediately broke up their sitting to execute it. The following was the disposition of their little force, as stated by Regan:—"The vanguard was assigned to Myles de Cogan, consisting of two hundred; Raymond le Gros, with other two hundre, commanded the battle; and the erle, with two hundre, marched in the reare. In this interprize, full of peril, they used not the aid of their Irish soldiers; for neyther in their fidelity nor in their valour reposed they confidence, saving only of the persons of Donald Kavannagh, and Mac Gely, and Awliff O'Carvie, of whom they wer assured. Unto Finglass they directed their march. When they approached the enemies' campe, who wer careless and secure, not mistrusting any suche attempt, Myles de Cogan, to encourage his souldiers—"In the name of God," said he, "let us this day try our valour upon these savages, or dye like men;" and therewithall broke furiously into the camp, and made such slaughter as all fled before hym. Raymond, callinge upon St David, furiously rushed in amongst his enemies, and performed wonders; and so did the erle Richard; but especially Meyler Fitz-Henry's valour was admired at bye all men.

* The officers present at this council are mentioned by Maurice Regan:—Robert de Quincy, Walter de Ridleford, Maurice de Prendergast, Myles de Cogan, Myles Fitz-Henry, Myles Fitz-David, Richard de Maroine, Walter Bluett, and others, to the number of twenty.

In Boynhill of the enemies were slain more than one hundred and fifty; of the English there was only one footman hurt. This overthrow so discouraged the Irish, as the siege was nearly abandoned; and in the enemies' campe store of baggage was gotten, and such quantities of corn, meale, and pork, as was sufficiant to victuall the citty for one whole yere."*

Thus, by a single effort, was dissolved a league, the apparent power of which fully justified the haughty imposition of terms proposed by Roderic, through the archbishop of Dublin. Strongbow was now at liberty to proceed to Wexford to the succour of the unfortunate Fitz-Stephen. This brave man had, for a long time held out with a resolution and skill which rendered vain the most furious efforts of his assailants. At length they had recourse to a stratagem, which might be excused on the plea of utter barbarism, were it not frightfully aggravated by the more atrocious perjury. They demanded a parley, in which, assuming the tone of friendly sympathy, they assured Fitz-Stephen that Strongbow had been defeated, and that Roderic was now on his march to Wexford, with the resolution of storming his fortress and putting his garrison to the sword, and that Fitz-Stephen himself was more especially the object of his vengeance. They had resolved that under these dreadful circumstances, he should not be left ignorant of the danger that awaited him; they could not assist, but they would countenance and facilitate his escape. Fitz-Stephen hesitated. His garrison amounted to about a score of persons; the besiegers were at least three thousand. Their improbable professions of regard seemed to throw an air of doubt over their whole story. To remove all further hesitation, they produced the bishops of Wexford and Kildare in their robes, and bearing the cross, the host, and some relics; laying their hands on these, the perfidious barbarians confirmed their falsehood by an oath. Fitz-Stephen, completely duped, without further question, delivered himself and his hapless associates to the mercy of these miscreants. They instantly cast him into chains; and, disarming his men, exhausted on them every torture they could devise. In the midst of this inhuman employment, they received intelligence of Strongbow's approach; on which they set fire to Wexford, and decamped with Fitz-Stephen and the surviving prisoners.

In the meantime, Strongbow had not been allowed to reach his destination without the usual share of adventures. For a while he marched on without the appearance of a foe, until he reached a narrow pass between vast bogs in the district of Hidrone, in the county of Carlow. Here O'Ryan, the lord of the place, placed an armed force in ambush to intercept him in the most difficult part of this passage. On the arrival of the English at this point, they were unexpectedly attacked by an impetuous burst of these uncouth assailants, who broke in among them with hideous outcries, and, for a moment, threw them into confusion. They even succeeded so far as to beat Meyler Fitz-Henry to the ground, and it was not without much difficulty that he was extricated from their fury. At this moment an

* Regan.

arrow, discharged by a monk, killed O'Ryan, when the enemy fled as wildly as they had advanced. The earl regained the plain with the loss of only one young man.

It is a tradition that, on this occasion, Strongbow's only son was so terrified at the sudden rush and savage appearance of the Irish, that he turned and fled to Dublin, where he reported the death of his father and the destruction of his entire force. When undeceived from this error, he appeared before his father to congratulate him on his victory: the earl had him seized and condemned to death. It is even added that he slew him with his own hand. "This tradition," observes Leland, "receives some countenance from the ancient monument in the cathedral of Dublin, in which the statue of the son of Strongbow is continued only to the middle, with the bowels open and supported by the hands; but, as this monument was erected some centuries after the death of Strongbow, it is thus of less authority. The Irish annalists mention the earl's son as engaged in several actions posterior to this period."*

Strongbow, on his arrival at Wexford, had the mortification to learn, by a deputation from the Irish, that Fitz-Stephen remained in their hands, and that any attempt to molest them in their retreat, would cause them to strike off his head. He felt the risk, and, with vain regret for his friend, turned towards Waterford.

At Waterford, he found himself soon involved in the inextricable web of Irish feuds. These are not in themselves sufficiently remarkable to be described with the detail of history; it may be sufficient to say, that some of the chiefs of the neighbouring districts, by artful misrepresentations, endeavoured to league him with their petty hostilities, and to make his power instrumental to their private animosities and ambitious designs. From Waterford he proceeded to Ferns, where, for some days, he remained in the exercise of royal authority.

He was, however, not long allowed to plume himself in the state of royalty. His uncle, Hervey de Montmorres, whom he had deputed to king Henry, now landed at Waterford, bearing letters and messages from his friends in England, strongly urging that he should not lose a moment in presenting himself before the king. Of the necessity of this, Strongbow was himself fully sensible, and resolved to set out without delay.

We have already mentioned the troubles in which Becket's death had involved the king. From these it had required all his eminent courage and sagacity to deliver him. But he was now free to follow the impulse of his ambition, which had long contemplated Ireland as an enviable accession to his dominions. With this view he had, so far back as 1155, procured a bull from pope Adrian IV., who was an Englishman, authorizing the conquest of Ireland; this, with its subsequent confirmation by a breve from pope Alexander, he had suffered to lie by till a favourable juncture of circumstances might render it available. The season was now arrived, and the king entered with alacrity on his preparations. His first steps, however, were calculated to mislead expectation. He began by disclaiming all countenance of the

* Lel. i. p. 61, note.

proceedings of the English adventurers, and summoned Strongbow to his presence, to answer for his unauthorized proceedings.

But he not the less prepared for the meditated enterprise by an extensive levy of money and forces. Mr Moore observes, that "from the disbursements made for the arms, provision, and shipping of the army, as set forth in the pipe roll of the year 1171, still preserved, it would appear that the force raised for the expedition was much more numerous than has been represented by historians."*

Henry at first refused to see Strongbow, but, on the mediation of De Montmorres, admitted him to an audience. Affecting a high tone of offended majesty, he allowed himself to be appeased by the concessions of the earl, who yielded up his Irish acquisitions, and, in return, was restored to his English and Norman estates, with large tracts of Irish territory, to be held in perpetuity under the English crown. This arrangement was ratified by a formal instrument, by which Dublin and its adjoining districts were ceded to the king, together with the maritime towns and places of strength acquired by Strongbow. By these concessions, he was restored to favour, and allowed to attend the king to Pembroke, where he resided during his preparations.

Meanwhile, a last effort was made by O'Ruark against the garrison of Dublin, commanded by Miles de Cogan in the absence of the earl. The attack was vigorous, and repelled with some loss; but with the usual fortune of all the efforts hitherto made by the Irish against their invaders, the first repulse was a decided and sanguinary defeat.

The report of Henry's approach excited no sensation among the Irish. The little spirit of resistance which might yet remain was much damped by the uniform failure of all the efforts which had been successively made against the English. The vast accession of strength which these were now to gain by the approach of the royal army, must have been felt to render all resistance unavailing. But, in addition to this, a lulling impression was produced by the specious manifestations of the king. He professed to come over to assert his unquestioned sovereignty against invaders, who had usurped his power and made war upon his subjects. Devoid of all sense of national existence, each petty chieftain thought of his own interests alone, and looked either with apathy, or with the malignity of some private resentment, on the probable dissolution of their own monarch's power.

His preparations being complete, the king embarked at Milford, and on the 18th October, 1171, landed at Croch, near Waterford. His force amounted to 500 knights, with about 4000 men, distributed in 400† vessels.

There was, on the intelligence of his landing, a general movement through the country, among those whom his arrival impressed with fear or expectation. The Wexford men, who had detained Fitz-Stephen,

* In the following note on the above extract, Mr Moore gives some curious particulars. "Lynch, *feudal dignities*, &c. Some of the smaller payments, as given by this writer, are not a little curious. Thus we find 26s. 6d. paid for adorning and gilding the king's sword; £12 10s. for 1000 pounds of wax; 118s. 7d. for 569 pounds of almonds, sent to the king in Ireland; 15s. 11d. for five carts."—*Moore*, ii. 248.

† "240" Ann. Ulst.—quoted by Leland.

came and delivered him up, with themselves, their lands, and allegiance to the disposal of the king. They represented their zeal as proved by the seizure of "a traitor to his sovereign," who had, without warrant, "slaughtered their people, seized their lands, and attempted to establish himself independent of his liege lord." The king received them with expressions of favour, and declared that he would inquire into the crimes of Fitz-Stephen, whom, in the meantime, with his wonted double policy, he reprimanded and confined until he had compelled the concession of his acquisitions as the price of favour and freedom. On the same occasion, Strongbow made a formal cession of Waterford, and did homage for his principality of Leinster. Dermot Macarthy, prince of Desmond, was the first of the native princes who submitted. On the next day after Henry's arrival, he came in, and surrendering the dominion of his capital city of Cork, Henry received his oath of fealty, confirmed his subordinate rights, and placed a governor and garrison of his own in Cork. From Waterford he marched to Lismore, and thence to Cashel, near which he received the submission of O'Brien, prince of Limerick. It is not necessary here to state the repetitions of the same proceeding, accompanied by similar circumstances, which attended the successive steps of his progress, at every stage of which he was met by the submission and homage of the neighbouring princes and chiefs, which he received with a conciliating deportment, and secured by garrisons and governors. Among their names, as mentioned by Giraldus, that of O'Rourke arrests the attention of the reader. Roderic alone exhibited, in the manner of his submission, some indications of reluctance. He came no nearer than the Shannon, "which divideth Connaught from Meath," where he was met by Hugh de Lacy and William Fitz-Adelm, who received his oath of allegiance, by which he declared himself tributary to England.

The king kept the festival of Christmas in Dublin, near which he had erected a palace of wattles for his residence. He was here attended by most of the native chiefs, whose astonishment at his magnificence is thus described by Giraldus:—"When they saw the great abundance of victuals, and the noble services, as also the eating of cranes, which they much loathed, being not before accustomed thereunto, they much wondered and marvelled thereat, but in the end, they being by the king's commandment set down, did also there eat and drink among them."

During his stay, Henry assembled a synod at Cashel, composed chiefly of the Irish prelates, in which many canons were decreed. To notice these distinctly would lead us farther into the province of church history than the purpose of this memoir admits of. Matthew Paris mentions a lay council at Lismore, where "the laws of England were gratefully accepted by all, and confirmed by the solemnity of an oath." Henry next proceeded to Wexford, where he passed the remainder of his stay in endeavouring to strengthen his hold on the faith and allegiance of his principal English officers who were to remain in the country; and, above all, to secure himself against the power and influence of Strongbow, to whom his jealousy was the source of much trouble and vexation during the rest of his life.

The absence of all news from England, owing to the weather having been so unusually tempestuous, that for some months no ship approached the Irish coast, had for some time much depressed the king's mind. At last, about the middle of Lent, ships from England and France brought intelligence of the fresh revolt of his ungrateful children, and also of the arrival of the papal legates to place his kingdom under an interdict for the murder of Becket. These perplexing accounts admitted of no delay; ordering his forces to Waterford, where his fleet awaited him, he embarked for England on the 17th of April.

It is to be regretted that this able and sagacious monarch was not allowed, by the course of events, to remain until he had completed the structure of which he imperfectly laid the foundation. The quiet submission of the natives, with the sound method of equalizing and soothing policy by which it was obviously the king's intent and interest to cement this newly acquired dominion with the mass of his kingdom, by the only just and effective tie of a full intercommunity of interest and laws, might be expected to have ultimately placed the interests of the island on the securest foundation. Yet, however we may arrive at this conclusion, and concur with those who are of opinion that such would have been the most desirable result for the country and for the body of the people; at the same time the general course of experience, from the history of similar changes, and especially the process which had so recently altered the constitution and transferred the power and property of England, warrants the added conclusion, that the continued attention of the king to Irish affairs—while it much enlarged the basis of popular right, and much advanced the prospects of civilization—by a succession of arbitrary interferences on slight pretexts, would have made much more extensive transfers of the property of the country. Fresh settlers would soon have brought with them new demands on his bounty, and desires of extended settlement; and causes of exasperation would not have failed to furnish pretexts for a more iron-handed subjugation. The course of events depends little on the intent of the hand which sets them in motion; strong necessities, which arise from the cross winds of seeming chance and the complex currents of human passions, impel the subsequent course of policy with forces which it is easier to speculate on than to govern. Slight grievances would have produced discontents, which the direction of a more arbitrary power would have settled more tranquilly, but more sternly.

As circumstances turned out, the jealousy of the king was not directed towards the natives, of whose power of resistance he made small account. But he felt afraid of the power of Strongbow, which, from the extreme smallness of the English settlement, was likely (if allowed) to grow into an ill-balanced and preponderant authority, in which the temptations to disaffection would be strong. To control this, Henry effected on a small scale, that which, if circumstances had induced and warranted, he would have effected to a more serious extent. He raised up several others into power, dignity, and wealth, with extensive allotments of land, and great privileges and immunities. He gave Ulster to De Courcy, and Meath to De Lacy, and several grants in like manner to others, whom, in the course of these memoirs, we shall have distinct occasions to notice.

Earl Strongbow was thus placed in the mortifying position of a subordinate, where he must have felt that he had the first claim, both by right and rank. He retired to Ferns, for the marriage of his daughter to De Quincy, to whom he gave large grants of lands. But De Quincy was not long suffered to enjoy his honours; Strongbow being obliged to march into Ophaly to compel the payment of his tribute, his force was attacked in the rear, and De Quincy, with many others, slain, before order could be restored.

But the eclipse of Strongbow's favour, quickly passed away. King Henry became the object of a powerful confederacy. The unnatural rebellion of his unruly sons was joined by many foreign potentates, who were jealous of his greatness, and hostilities began to menace him from every side. Among other steps for his defence, he was obliged to draw forces from Ireland. Strongbow was foremost in this moment of emergency, and displayed such zeal and efficiency, that Henry trusted him with the government of Gisors. The effects of this step were highly detrimental to the interests of the Irish settlement: the absence of the troops and chief leaders excited a general insurrection of the native chiefs, which we shall again have to notice more fully.

These troubles were heightened by dissensions among the English leaders who remained, and matters were proceeding to a dangerous length, when Henry resolved to send Strongbow over, as the only person whose authority was likely to have weight with all. Having communicated this design to Strongbow, the earl, aware of the jealous temper of the king, proposed that he should have a colleague joined in commission with him; by this he also hoped to be able to turn aside the jealousy of his rivals and enemies. Henry would not consent to the proposal of a colleague, but gave his consent to have Raymond le Gros employed in any service he might think fit. He also granted to Strongbow, on this occasion, the town of Wexford, together with a fort erected at Wicklow.

On landing in Ireland, Strongbow quickly found himself immersed in distresses of no light order. Obligated to send off Fitz-Stephen, De Prendergast, De Lacy, De Cogan, and others, with a considerable force for the service of Henry, with a weakened army he had to contend with the increasing opposition of the Irish chiefs. The soldiery were on the point of mutiny, from their discontent with the command of Hervey de Montmorres, and at last positively refused to march or obey orders, unless under the command of their favourite leader Raymond. Strongbow was obliged to comply; and, in order to propitiate discontents justly excited by their pay having been allowed to fall into arrears, he sent them on an expedition into Ophaly, where a rich plunder was to be expected. Raymond led them into Ophaly, where they met with no resistance; and not long after obtained a slight success in the field over Malachy, prince of Desmond, which had the good effect of restoring alacrity and confidence to his army.

This beneficial effect was in some degree counteracted by the combined incapacity and rashness of Hervey de Montmorres, who, jealous of the success, fame, and favour of Raymond, was anxious to do something to raise his own character. He availed himself of the pliability of Strongbow, whose mind being rather fitted for the field than for the

council, disposed him very much to be led by the suggestions of others: and proposed to him a specious plan of operations to suppress the turbulent spirit of the Munster chiefs. The only result of this plan, was the surprise of a body of Danish troops, who had been injudiciously ordered to march from Dublin to join the English. O'Brien allowed them to march as far as Thurles, without meeting any indication which might awaken their vigilance. Here they encamped, in the carelessness of perfect security, and, when they least expected, found themselves defenceless and in the power of an armed force, which burst into their encampment, and, without resistance, slaughtered four hundred men with their leaders.

The incident was productive of the worst consequences. Strongbow himself, alarmed by a disaster so little to be anticipated, retreated into Waterford. The Irish chieftains rose in arms; and, at a preconcerted signal, Donald Kavanagh, who from the beginning had sided with the English, now thinking that this reverse left an opening for him to lay claim to his father's province, withdrew his fidelity, and asserted his right to Leinster; while the brave king of Connaught, hoping at last some prospect of union and fidelity from this show of zeal, once more exerted his activity in an endeavour to combine the chiefs, and give method and concert to their efforts.

Strongbow, in this emergency, became sensible of the necessity of Raymond's services. He had offended this eminent soldier by the refusal of his sister; he now sent to solicit his presence, and made the lady's hand the price of conciliation. Raymond came, and brought with him a well appointed force from Wales. Collecting thirty of his own relations, with a hundred horse and three hundred archers, he embarked in twenty transports, and landed at Waterford.

It was agreed between Strongbow and Raymond, to march without delay to Wexford. Departing, they left a small, but as they thought sufficient, garrison behind them. The event was nearly fatal to this body. The townsmen of Waterford were secretly disaffected to the English, and thinking they had now a fair opportunity to seize on the town, they concerted their measures for this purpose. The garrison took no precautions against an enmity of which they had no suspicion; but acted as if among friends. Their commander crossed the Suir in a boat with few attendants; his whole party were suddenly assailed and murdered by the boatmen, who, it is to be supposed, went prepared for the purpose. This horrible deed was the signal for massacre; the bloody tidings were scarcely echoed from the observers on the shore, when the English were simultaneously attacked, and all who were unarmed, without distinction of age or sex, became the helpless victims. Of the garrison many were in the citadel, and many who were abroad contrived to join them. Arming themselves, they sallied forth into the streets, and soon reduced the rabble, who had attempted to besiege them, to sue for quarter and invent excuses for their treason.

Strongbow in the meantime staid in Wexford. Thither his sister Basilia had repaired, with a splendid retinue from Dublin, and was married to Raymond le Gros. The rejoicings were suddenly arrested by the startling intelligence that Roderic, still indefatigable in an ill-supported opposition, had passed the Shannon at the head of the

combined army of the Irish chiefs, and entering Meath had expelled the English, and devastated the land to the walls of Dublin. There was a sudden stop to the festal proceedings; Raymond was compelled to change his festal weed and softer cares, for a sterner attire and purpose. He marched to Dublin, resolved to meet and crush the confederacy which had thus inopportunistically called him to the field. But with the usual inconsistency of such confederacies, the impulse of the chiefs, who had no common object, had exhausted itself in the ravage of a province; and Roderic was left alone before the enemy had time to come up. Disappointed and depressed by this further evidence of the hopelessness of the cause, in which he felt himself alone, he endeavoured, by a judicious retreat, to save his own small party.

Strongbow, with Raymond, arrived in time to convert the retreat of some of the numerous parties, which had thus fallen asunder, into a destructive flight. They restored the English settlement, and had the forts rebuilt at the cost of Tyrrel, who governed there for Hugh de Lacy.

Many circumstances now occurred which seemed to give some assurance of union and prosperity to the English; but in the midst of these events, Strongbow's death took place in Dublin, after a tedious and painful illness, in the month of May, 1177. Raymond, apprized of this event by a letter from his wife, hurried privately to Dublin, and, with the archbishop, Lawrence O'Toole, solemnized his funeral. Strongbow was interred in Christ church, to which he had (with other English leaders) made considerable additions.*

The following description has been transmitted by Giraldus, of his person and character:—

"Earl Strongbow was of a complexion somewhat sanguine and spotted; his eyes grey, his countenance feminine, his voice small, his neck slender, but in most other particulars he was well formed and tall; liberal and courteous in his manners; and what he could not gain by power, he frequently obtained by an insinuating address. In peace he was more disposed to obey than to govern. His state and authority were reserved for the camp, and were supported with the utmost dignity. He was diffident of his own judgment, cautious of proposing his own plans of operation; but in executing those of others, undaunted and vigorous. In battle, he was the standard on which his soldiers fixed their eyes, and by whose motions they were determined either to advance or to retreat. His temper was composed and uniform; not dejected by misfortune, nor elated by success."

* "Laurence, archbishop of Dublin, Richard, surnamed Strongbow, earl of Strigul, Robert Fitz-Stephens, and Raymond le Gros, undertook to enlarge this church, and at their own charges built the choir, the steeple, and two chapels; one dedicated to St Edmund, king and martyr, and to St Mary, called the White, and the other to St Laud."—*Harri's Ware*.

O'Ruark, Prince of Brefni.

DIED A. D. 1173.

THE reader who has read the memoir which has commenced this series, in which we have given an outline of the history of the English invasion, will have been fully possessed of the incidents which give O'Ruark a claim on his notice, as one of the main actors in this momentous revolution; and we may be excused for not breaking the continuity of narration, which it has been our study to preserve, by reverting to the early events of this period.

Outraged by the infidelity of his wife, and the libertinism of the prince of Leinster; compelled also by the necessity of his position, in the very centre of the seat of a conflict for territory which lasted through the remainder of his life; he was a party in every contest and confederacy by which the English might be unfixed from their acquisitions.

We shall therefore here merely relate the circumstances attending his death.

Although the province of Meath had been granted to De Lacy, yet, by virtue of arrangements made by Roderic, O'Ruark was still allowed to retain possession of the eastern territory of this province. Unsatisfied with a portion of his ancient possessions, and apprehending, not without reason, the effect of further encroachment, he repaired to Dublin and demanded redress from De Lacy. A conference ensued, which led to no accommodation. Another meeting was appointed, which was to take place on the hill of Tara. This was in accordance with the ancient custom of Ireland, by which differences between chiefs were to be settled by a meeting in some place distant from the dwelling of both, where neither might have any advantage of force; and on some open hill, where the danger of treachery might be more easily guarded against.

Cambrensis and, after him, most of our authorities mention, that the night before this conference was to take place, Griffith, the brother to Raymond le Gros, had a dream, in which he thought he saw a flock of wild boars rushing upon De Lacy and his uncle Maurice Fitz-Gerald; and that one more fierce and monstrous than the others was about to kill them, when he saved them by slaying the monster. Alarmed by this dream, which was the natural result of the workings of an apprehensive understanding, excited by the interest of the occasion, and the restless alertness of youth, Griffith the next morning would have dissuaded the English chiefs from the meeting. De Lacy was not to be deterred by a dream, although the issue which it seemed to forebode was always the highly probable end of such meetings. Griffith, however, was not so easily dispossessed of the apprehension thus awakened in his mind. He selected seven associates, all distinguished for valour, and repairing to the place of meeting, he approached the spot where the conference was to be held, as near as the arrangements of the parties would admit of; and while the conference went on uninterrupted, they rode about the field affecting to engage

in chivalric exercises. For a little while all went on with temper, although without any approach to amicable agreement, between O'Ruark on one part, and De Lacy with Maurice Fitz-Gerald on the other. Suddenly O'Ruark, under some pretext, retired some way from where they stood, and, when at a safe distance, made a signal. It was instantly answered by the sudden appearance of an armed party who came rapidly up the hill. They were already upon the English lords, before the attention of Griffith's party was caught by their appearance: De Lacy and Maurice had therefore to fight for their lives.

So rapid was their approach that De Lacy, whose back was turned, was taken by surprise. Maurice Fitz-Gerald saw his danger, drew his sword, and called out to warn him; but O'Ruark, whose party had in the meantime surrounded them, rushing at De Lacy, attempted to strike him with his battle-axe before he could put himself in a posture of defence; the blow was fortunately warded off by his interpreter, whom it laid on the ground. De Lacy was twice struck down, but a stroke which would have ended his life was warded off by Fitz-Gerald, whom the chance of the struggle brought near. A few seconds were enough for this rapid and violent action; another instant might have been fatal; but Griffith and his gallant party were now on the spot, and the assailants were endeavouring to escape. O'Ruark ran towards his horse, which stood close by where he had left it on first alighting to the conference; he was just in the act of mounting, when the spear of Griffith passed through his body. His party was then attacked and put to flight with some slaughter. His death removed a serious obstacle to the ambition of De Lacy. This incident occurred in 1173.

Maurice Fitz-Gerald.

DIED A. D. 1177.

THE origin of this illustrious ancestor of a race whose history is for ages identified with that of Ireland, is derived by the heralds from Otho, a noble descended from the dukes of Tuscany, and contemporary with king Alfred. The family are supposed to have come over with the Normans into England, and finally to have settled in Wales. Dugdale, however, affirms that Otho was an English baron, in the reign of Edward the Confessor; but this inconsistency between the two accounts, may be simply due to the confusion of the common name of two different persons, both probably of the same race. Of the latter person of this name, it is said that he was father to Walter Fitz-Otho, who in 1078 was castellan of Windsor, and appointed by William the Conqueror warden of the forests of Berkshire, being then possessed of two lordships in that county, three in Surrey, three in Dorsetshire, four in Middlesex, nine in Wiltshire, one in Somerset, and ten in the county of Southampton.* He married the daughter of a Welsh chief or prince, Rywall-ap-Cotwyn, by whom he had three sons, Gerald, Robert, and William.

* Lodge, i. 55.

Of these, heralds have had much discussion, without being able to settle the seniority. "Gerald, the eldest son, in the earl of Kildare's pedigree," observes Lodge, "being made the youngest in the earl of Kerry's, drawn in the year 1615, and attested by Sir William Seager, garter king of arms, who is followed by his successors, Dugdale and Anstis, for which they assign this reason, viz., *That the appellation of Fitz-Walter was given to this Gerald, because he was the younger son.* To controvert this is to encounter great authority; but we think it deserves an inquiry, how the consequences of his being a younger son, can be drawn from his having the appellation of *Fitz-Walter*? The custom of that age warrants us to affirm the contrary, and to assert that the eldest son (*especially*) assumed for his surname the Christian name of his father, with the addition of Fitz, &c., of which many instances occur in this very family; and this continued in use till surnames began to be fixed about the time of king Edward I.* We do not consider the question material to be settled here, and quote so far for the sake of the incidental matter.

On the revolt of a Welsh prince, Fitz-Walter was employed by Henry I. to reduce him to submission; and on his success, was appointed president of the county of Pembroke, and rewarded with extensive grants in Wales. From this he settled there, and married Nesta, the daughter of a Welsh prince. The history of this lady offers a curious illustration of the lax morality of the 11th century. She had been mistress to king Henry, by whom she had a son; she was next married to Stephen, constable of the castles of Pembroke and Cardigan; and lastly, to Gerald Fitz-Walter. The fortune which united her descendants in the common enterprise which forms the main subject of this period, is not less remarkable; for Meiler Fitz-Henry, Robert Fitz-Stephen, and Maurice Fitz-Gerald, were thus related by the mother's side.

Maurice came over with Fitz-Stephen in 1168, and took a principal part in all the successes and hardships which followed. When Henry paid his visit to the island, at his departure in 1173, he left Maurice as governor conjointly with Hugh de Lacy. In discharge of this important trust he performed many important services. It was during this administration that the occurrence of O'Ruark's attempted treachery and violent death, already related, took place.

The affairs of Henry became, at this time, deeply involved. The repeated rebellions of his turbulent and ungrateful sons were becoming more formidable as they became more influentially connected with foreign politics, and supported by the power and political intrigue of his enemies. He was menaced by a dangerous war, which made it necessary for him to draw away his Irish forces, with the most experienced and trustworthy of their leaders. Among these, Maurice was thus removed from the scene where his wisdom and valour were so much required; and it was not till 1176, that he was again brought back by the earl of Pembroke. From this nobleman he received large grants in Leinster, among which was a renewal of the king's grant of the barony of Ophaly, and the castle of Wicklow.†

* Lodge, note 55.

† Then Wykenlooe.—Lodge.

Maurice died in the autumn of the following year, 1177, and was buried in the Grey Friars, near Wexford; he left four sons, and one daughter. Of these, Gerald was the elder; the second, William, left a daughter, through whom the barony of Naas descended to the lords Gormanstown.

Robert Fitz-Stephen.

DIED A. D. 1182.

If it were our object to relate the history of this entire period under the head of a single life, the fittest for selection would be that of Robert Fitz-Stephen. But there are few particulars of his eventful and active course, which are not mentioned in their place. By maternal descent he was brother to the Fitz-Geralds—the mother of both having been Nesta, the daughter of Rees ap Tudor, who after an illegitimate union with Henry the First, was married first to Stephen (*Custos Campe Abertivi*), by whom she had Fitz-Stephen, and then to Gerald the son of Otho, and castellan of Windsor.

The lands in Ireland granted to Fitz-Stephen were, first, a share in two cantreds near Wexford, granted by Dermot M'Murrough between him and Maurice Fitz-Gerald, on the capture of Wexford. The city of Wexford shortly after fell into his possession; but this he was forced to give up to king Henry, as the price of his liberty, when, by a most base perjury, with the connivance of two bishops, Malachy O'Brin and John O'Hethe, he was cajoled into a surrender of his person, into the hands of those who besieged him in his castle of Carrig.

His services were afterwards requited, by a grant from the king to himself and Miles de Cogan, of the kingdom of Cork, from Lismore to the sea, with the exception of the city of Cork. This grant was to be held of the king by a service of sixty knights. The settlement, on being claimed, was disputed by the native chiefs of the province, who, with great justice, submitted that they had not resisted king Henry, or committed any act to which the penalty of forfeiture could be attached. The remonstrance was too obviously just, not to be allowed some weight. Fortunately for the peace of this district, neither party was possessed of the means of resistance: a few slight skirmishes satisfied each, that no decisive result was likely to follow the appeal to force, and a compromise was made to the satisfaction of the new grantees. By this agreement, the English chiefs were allowed to hold seven cantreds near Cork, the remaining twenty-four being retained by the native chiefs.

Fitz-Stephen's life had been one of great exertion and vicissitude. His old age was one of severe afflictions. Miles de Cogan his kinsman and friend, and his son Ralph Fitz-Stephen, who had not long been married to Miles' daughter, were, on their way to Waterford, engaged to pass a night at the house of a native, of the name of Mac Tire. This vile miscreant had been on terms of friendly intimacy with his victims, and, considering their wealth and power, it is probable that he had obtained their confidence, by having received kindness from their families. Nothing had occurred, it is evident, to lessen their reliance

on the friendly hospitality of their host, at whose instance their journey had been undertaken, and by whose special invitation they were his guests. The particulars cannot with any certainty be described, but it is certain that, in a moment of confiding security, they were assassinated, with five followers, in the house of their perfidious host.

This event excited terror amongst the followers of the English knight, and an ill-warranted sense of triumph among the natives. The account quickly spread, and became the signal for war and tumult; Macarthy of Desmond, who yet retained the title of king of Cork, collected his followers and laid siege to the city of Cork. Fitz-Stephen, overwhelmed by his recent calamity, was little capable of resistance. In this affliction his friends had recourse to Raymond le Gros, who, coming from Wexford by sea, with twenty knights and one hundred archers, compelled Macarthy to submission. Poor Fitz-Stephen, received no consolation from this service. A life of severe toil and vicissitude, had worn his strength; he had been heavily afflicted by the loss of another, it is said, his favourite son: this last trial overcame him, and his rescuer found him deprived of reason.

On his death, the Carews laid claim to his estate. But Ware writes that the claim was set aside on the ground of Fitz-Stephen's being illegitimate. The plea on which legal decision can have been grounded, is likely to have some foundation; but it seems inconsistent with the concurrent testimonies of history, which agree in representing his mother Nesta as having been married to Stephen. The facts are, however, not directly contradictory; and it must be admitted, that in the statements of the annalists of the period, accuracy is not the principal recommendation.

Raymond le Gros.

DIED A. D. 1184.

RAYMOND FITZ-GERALD, called, from his large person and full habits, Le Gros, was the son of William Fitz-Gerald, and grandson of Gerald of Windsor, and the bravest of the first adventurers who, in the 12th century, sought and found fortune in this island. From the beginning his courage and prowess were signalized by those hardy and prompt feats of valour which, in the warfare of that age, when so much depended on personal address and strength, were often important enough to decide the fortune of the field. And there is hardly one of the combats which we have had occasion to notice, which does not offer some special mention of his name. We shall take up his history a little back, among the events we have just related.

When Strongbow had been summoned to attend the English monarch, the command of the forces in Ireland was committed to the care of Montmorres, to whom Raymond was second in command. This combination was productive of some jealousy on the part of Montmorres, which led to ill offices, and ripened into mutual animosity. Montmorres was proud, tenacious of the privileges and dignity of his station, and felt the acrimony of an inferior mind excited against one,

whose soldier-like virtues and brilliant actions rendered him the mark of general admiration and the idol of the soldiery. Montmorres was an exactor of discipline on slight occasions, and appeared more anxious to vindicate his authority, than to consult the comfort, interest or safety of the army; while Raymond, on the contrary, showed in all his acts and manners the most ready and earnest zeal for the welfare and security of every individual. Frank and easy in his address, he preserved no unnecessary distance; and seemed more ready to endure hardship, and face danger himself, than to impose them on others.

The influence of these qualities, so attractive in a rude and warlike age, was not confined to the soldiery. Raymond's reputation stood at the highest among the leaders; and when Strongbow desired a colleague of the king, he at the same time named Raymond as the worthiest and most efficient of these adventurers. When Strongbow arrived in Ireland, he found the cry of discontent loud against Montmorres; and we have already related how Raymond's merit was enforced by the soldiers, who presented themselves in a body to demand him for their leader. The first exploit which was the result of his appointment, we have briefly mentioned. The troops destined for England, had been attacked after their embarkation, by the people of Cork. The assault was however repelled. Raymond having heard of the incident, was hastening with a small party of twenty knights and sixty horsemen to their aid, when his way was intercepted by Macarthy; a short struggle ensued, in which Macarthy was worsted and obliged to retreat, though with a force vastly superior. Raymond, with a large and rich spoil, entered Waterford in triumph.

Raymond had long entertained a passion for Basilia, the sister of Strongbow. But the earl had uniformly turned a deaf ear to his solicitations on this head. Raymond however now entertained the notion that his rising fame, his acknowledged usefulness, and the earl's own preference for him might avail to ensure a more favourable answer. But the earl, while he felt the full value of Raymond's services, did not much wish to place a leader of such popularity, and so likely to force his way to pre-eminence, on a level of advantage so near himself. He therefore received the overtures of Raymond with a coldness which gave offence to the pride of this brave warrior, who, with the resentment provoked by a strong sense of injured merit and unrequited service, retired hastily into Wales.

It was during his absence that the misfortunes, recited in the last memoir, arose from the precipitate ambition and incapacity of Montmorres, followed by the insurrection of the chiefs, and the bold but vain attempt of Roderic.

In his retirement Raymond was gratified by a despatch from the earl, entreating his prompt assistance, and offering him the hand of Basilia, with his other demands, viz., the post of constable and standard-bearer of Leinster. The triumph of Raymond was indeed decisive; the incapacity of his rival and enemy was the cause of the disasters which he was thus called upon to repair: his merit was amply vindicated from the slight it had sustained, and acknowledged by the gratification of his utmost wishes. Collecting a well-appointed and brave though small force, he came over and landed in Waterford.

We have already related the main particulars of his marriage in Wexford, and with it the interruption of his happiness by the iron call of war. On this occasion he received a large grant of lands, as the dowry of his wife, and was made constable and standard-bearer of Leinster.* The spontaneous dispersion of the Irish confederacy followed.

Raymond was next sent to besiege Limerick. The city had been seized by the prince of Thomond, and was at this time in his possession. Raymond, with six hundred chosen men, marched to besiege it. Arriving at the banks of the Shannon, his advance was checked by broken bridges and a broad and dangerous stream. In this emergency two knights volunteered to try the way, and, entering the river where appearances were most favourable, they made their way across in safety; but, on their return, one was swept down the current and lost. A third knight, who had followed, passed safely, but remained in danger from the near approach of the enemy. There was some hesitation among the troops; when Raymond spurred forward from the rear, entered the stream, and called on his men to follow. The example of their chief gave confidence; and, without further hesitation, the whole body advanced into the rough and rapid waters, and, with the loss of two men, gained the opposite bank. The reader will best conceive the bravery of this exploit from its effect. The enemy—rough, hardy, and inured to the hardships of exposure and strife—were so astonished at the feat, that they fled without a blow. The English lost no time in this position, but at once pursued them; and, after a considerable slaughter of the fugitives, they obtained possession of the city without further resistance.

This success confirmed the fortune and fame of Raymond; but the envy of his rival was not asleep. Montmorres appears to have belonged to that low order of minds which shrink from open enmity, and adopt the safer and more cowardly alternative of carrying on their schemes under the hollow cover of a perfidious friendship. Such, if we are to credit Cambrensis, was the circuitous path followed by Hervey, who may perhaps have consulted other feelings, but certainly pursued revenge in seeking the advantages and opportunities of a near alliance with his rival. He married the daughter of Maurice Fitz-Gerald, the uncle of Raymond, and thus at once placed himself within the circumvallation of domestic confidence. He was not long before he availed himself of this position for the basest purposes. He despatched secret messengers to Henry, informing him of the dangerous course of Raymond's ambition, and assuring him, on the authority of a near kinsman, that his aspiring temper knew no limit short of the independent sovereignty of the kingdom; that for this purpose he studied the arts of a factious popularity; that he had secured Limerick, and propagated a secret feeling of disaffection to the king and devotion to himself through the whole army.

The consequence of representations thus proceeding from so authoritative a quarter, and backed by so many seeming confirmations, alarmed the cautious mind of Henry; he therefore, without delay,

* Leland, i. 109.

sent over four commissioners, of whom two were to conduct Raymond to the king, and the others to remain in order to watch the conduct of Strongbow, and obtain a general insight into the dispositions of the other leaders.

Raymond was at no loss to comprehend the whole machinery which had been set in motion against him. He declared his willingness to wait on the king. But while delays arose from the state of the weather, which prevented the ships from leaving port, an account came that the prince of Thomond had laid siege to Limerick; and that the garrison was in want of provisions, and, if not quickly relieved, must perish by famine or the enemy. This emergency was rendered critical by the illness of Strongbow. The earl, nevertheless, mustered his troops, and made the necessary preparations for their march. When all was ready, the soldiers refused to proceed without their favourite leader, under whom alone they had been accustomed to march to certain victory. The commissioners were consulted; and, seeing the necessity, consented that Raymond should take the command. But Raymond refused. It became, therefore, necessary for the earl and the commissioners to descend to the most earnest and pressing solicitations, to which he at length yielded with seeming reluctance and real triumph. The malice of his enemy had but given additional *éclat* to his fame.

He marched at the head of an army composed of eighty knights, with two hundred horsemen and three hundred archers. With these, a native force, under the prince of Ossory, swelled his numbers.

At his approach the prince of Thomond abandoned the siege, and coming to meet him, occupied a defile through which the path of the English lay; there, posting his men according to the well known tactics of the country, he awaited the approach of Raymond. The English leader soon obtained a view of the ambuscade, and calmly prepared to force his way through a position of which the dangers were so great and apparent, that it diffused terror and doubt among his allies. This sense was increased by the cool and deliberate deportment, and tranquil preparations of Raymond: the steady composure, too, of the English soldiers was little to be understood by the ardour of the Irish temperament. The prince of Ossory, under this fallacious impression, thought fit to address a remonstrance to the English knight. He bluntly informed Raymond that he had no alternative between destruction and victory. He pointed out his unprotected situation in the case of defeat; and told him, with a frankness which marks the low civilization of this period, that, if the day went against him, his Irish allies would instantly join the enemy for his destruction. Raymond received the exhortation with a stern smile, and answered it by commanding an immediate onset. The Irish received the attack with their native spirit, but with the result to be looked for from the superior arms and discipline of the assailants; they were driven with great slaughter from their intrenchments, and scattered in utter and irretrievable rout and confusion over the country. So great was this confusion, and so far did it spread, that the whole of Munster felt the shock. O'Brien, hitherto implacable in his enmity, saw the danger of allowing hostilities to proceed under such an aspect of circumstances. He proposed an interview with Raymond.

It happened, at the same time, that the king of Connaught, who had for some time begun to see plainly the folly of sacrificing his own province for the liberation of chiefs who would not be delivered by him—resolved to leave them at last to their fate, and to save the poor remains of his monarchy. For this purpose he sought the English camp, and arrived on the same day that O'Brien came in for the like purpose. Raymond had thus the honour of receiving the oaths and hostages of these two most respectable and formidable of the native princes; and by one signal action bringing the war to a termination with greater advantages than had yet been obtained.

A tragic romance in the family of a Munster chief—Macarthy of Desmond—afforded a fair pretext for continuing his operations in the field. Cormac, the eldest son of Macarthy, rose in rebellion against his father; and having thrown him into prison, seized possession of his territories. Macarthy had sworn allegiance to the king of England, and now claimed the protection of the English general, with promises of ample advantages, should he, by his means, obtain his freedom and power. Raymond unhesitatingly complied. Entering the territory of Desmond, he soon made it appear to the rebellious and unnatural Cormac that there was no resource short of unqualified submission. He yielded—his father was released and reinstated in his possessions: and Cormac thrown into the same dungeon which he had assigned to his father. Here the fate he amply merited was not long deferred. The gratitude of Macarthy was attested by a liberal grant to Raymond of territories, which he transmitted to his posterity; while an abundant supply for the wants of his army, gave an importance to this service in the estimation of the army and the commissioners.

It was at this period, that he received from his wife a letter, containing the following mystic enunciation:—

“ Know, my dear lord, that my great cheek tooth, which was wont to ache so much, is now fallen out; wherefore, if you have any care or regard of me, or of yourself, come away with all speed.”*

This communication, implying the death of Strongbow, was easily interpreted by Raymond, who set off without delay. The situation was one of great emergency. The troops were felt to be necessary, for the preservation of the English province thus deprived of its governor; and Raymond felt the mortifying sense, that their removal would be the signal for the native chiefs to renew their hostilities, and seize on the unprotected city. There yet was no alternative. In this situation, it occurred to him to make an experiment on the generosity and fidelity of the chief of Thomond. Sending for this prince, he assumed a confidential manner, and told him that as he was now become one of the great barons of the king, it was fit that he should receive, as such, a mark of confidence, suited to the high dignity of the rank: with this view it was now, he informed him, resolved to intrust him with the charge of Limerick, that he might have occasion to approve his attachment, and to merit added honours.

But Raymond had met with his superior in the game which he now

* Girald. Cox. Hammer.

ventured to play. The secret triumph of the Celt was concealed under the impenetrable aspect of simple faith, and by professions of cordial gratitude and lasting attachment. Without the slightest symptom of reluctant hesitation, he took the oaths required for the safe custody and faithful restoration of the town. Raymond, felicitating himself on the success of his expedient, now proceeded to march out of the town. He was scarcely over the bridge, when it was broken down at the other end; nor had he proceeded much farther, when he saw the flames arise in different quarters.

This occurrence was reported to the king, it is said, with the hope of exciting a prejudice against Raymond in his mind. But the effect was different. He is reported to have observed, "that the first gaining of Limerick was a noble exploit, the recovery of it still nobler; but that the only act of wisdom was the manner of its abandonment."

On the death of Strongbow, the council in Dublin, acting on a just sense of expediency, chose Raymond as his successor in the government, and their choice met the sanction of the king's commissioners. But the jealousy of the king had been too effectually worked upon by the artful misrepresentations of interested and angry enemies. He resolved to intrust the government to William Fitz-Adelm, whom he now sent into Ireland with twenty knights. With him he sent John de Courcy, Robert Fitz-Stephen, and Miles de Cogan, as an escort, with ten knights to each. With these came Vivian, the pope's legate, and Nicholas Wallingford, an English priest, bearing the brief of pope Alexander, in confirmation of the king's title to the sovereignty of Ireland.

Raymond received the new governor with the respect due to the king's representative, and delivered up the forts, towns, hostages, &c. On this occasion it is mentioned, by several of the Irish historians, on the authority of Cambrensis, that the new governor looked with a malignant eye on the numbers and splendour of Raymond's train, and turning to those who surrounded him observed, that he should soon find means to curtail this display.

He kept his word as far as he could, and Raymond was one of the English settlers who felt the weight of his oppressive government. His public career appears to have terminated from this: his name no more occupies a place in the history of the period. It appears that he lived in retirement on his property, near Wexford, and left his wife still living at his death. About five years after the period of Fitz-Adelm's arrival, we meet him once more in arms, with his wonted valour and success, in aid of his uncle, Fitz-Stephen, who was in danger of being attacked by superior numbers in Cork. As this event had place in 1182, and was quickly followed by occasions in which he could not have failed to be a party, we may venture to assume that his death happened within the next two years.

Hervey de Monte Mariscoe.

DIED A. D. 1179.

THIS person, the ancestor of the lords Mountmorres, and one of the first adventurers who came over with Strongbow, who was his uncle; was descended from the noble and ancient family of Mount Morency. His family came into England with the Conqueror, and had grants in Wales.

He received large grants in Ireland, in the counties of Tipperary, Wexford, and Kerry, "some of which," says Lodge, "are still vested in his family, but the greater part were carried by intermarriages into the houses of Ormonde and Leinster."*

When Strongbow went over to the assistance of king Henry in Normandy, Hervey was appointed, jointly with Raymond le Gros, to the command of the English army in Ireland. The particulars of this command may be found in our memoir of Raymond. Hervey was unpopular, and Raymond much regarded; so that, although second in command, he soon acquired a preponderance which soured the temper of Mountmorres and produced division between these leaders. It may be observed that the causes of dislike to Hervey on the part of the soldiery are rather honourable to him than otherwise, a chief discontent was his preventing them from indiscriminate plunder, for which they claimed licence in consideration of insufficient pay, and also his being severe in discipline. These jealousies were productive of consequences likely to be injurious to the English interest; and coming to the notice of Henry, they led to a different arrangement, by which his rival was joined in commission with Strongbow, who was sent back to Ireland.

In 1175, Hervey married Nesta, the daughter of Maurice Fitzgerald, and cousin to Raymond, an alliance which must have materially strengthened his interests, though disgraced by his perfidious conduct towards this latter eminent person.†

In 1179, he founded the abbey of Dunbrody, of the Cistercian order, in the county of Wexford—though Ware may be right in asserting that this abbey was not founded till 1182. In the year 1179, he retired from the world and became a "brother in the monastery of the Holy Trinity in Canterbury, but he was buried at Dunbrody, where a stately monument was erected to his memory."‡ His large estates passed to his brother Geoffrey, whom we afterwards meet as lord justice in Ireland, in the following century.

* Lodge, iii.

† See p. 289.

‡ Lodge.

Hugh de Lacy.

MED. A. D. 1186.

THE reader is already aware that, on the 14th October, 1172, king Henry landed at Waterford with a train of four hundred knights. Among these was Hugh de Lacy, a Norman by descent, and high in the favour and confidence of the king.

In his arrangements for the purpose of counterbalancing the rising power of Strongbow, we have mentioned already that Henry raised several of his knights into power and possession: amongst these De Lacy was the foremost. The grant of Meath, and the government of Dublin, conjointly with Maurice Fitz-Gerald and Robert Fitz-Stephen, laid, on broad foundations, the long-continued power and importance of his family.

He was immediately after left chief governor of Ireland; and during the season of his administration, had the adventure with O'Ruark, mentioned in our notice of that chief.*

De Lacy married a daughter of Roderic O'Connor, king of Connaught, the effect of which was to cause his recall in 1180. His government had, however, given satisfaction. He had preserved order, and materially strengthened the English settlement. He had by this time also, built many well-situated castles: castle Dermot, Leighlin, Leix, Delvin, Carlow, Tullaghphelim, and Kilkay.

In three months after, therefore, he was restored, and, as well as we can collect, continued till 1184. He was during this time as active and efficient as at first, and raised forts as numerous in Leinster as before in Meath. He employed the bravest adventurers, where their valour and activity might be as a safeguard to the bordering settlements, and administered justice impartially and mildly. The natural effect of such conduct was, to raise his authority in the country; his rivals, taking the usual advantage of this, again contrived to rouse the jealousy of Henry, and in 1184 he was displaced, and De Braosa sent in his room. It was during this interval that the romantic career of John de Courcy commenced under the auspices of De Lacy, to whose government his military prowess was an efficient support.

De Braosa's misconduct soon awakened Henry to a sense of the impolicy and injustice of the change which had superseded the vigour and experience of Hugh de Lacy; and he would have been once more reinstated, but a fatal and atrocious outrage deprived the king of his services. The impolicy of De Braosa had involved the settlement in commotion; incursions into Meath had done considerable mischief within the territories of De Lacy; and he was himself, with his characteristic ardour, engaged in repairing his forts. It was his custom to superintend, and occasionally to take part in the work, a practice

* There is some difference among historians, as to the identity of the native chief in this adventure. Cox names O'Meloghlin—but we have relied on the one of Leland.

explained by the rough and manly habits of his age, when all sorts of physical exertion were familiar in the highest rank. One of the forts he was thus engaged with, was founded on the site of an ancient abbey at Dorrowe, or Derwath. The respectable prejudices of the people were shocked by the profanation of a site, rendered sacred in their eyes by the recollections it bore. This feeling fermented among a multitude, until it awakened the fanaticism of one among the workmen; excited to a high degree by this insane affection, he resolved on the murder of the knight. For this purpose, he concealed a battle-axe under the ample folds of his mantle, and, when De Lacy stooped down, either in explaining his orders, or to make some exertion, he seized the occasion, and with a blow struck off his head. This event happened about 1186.

His death was the signal for fresh outbreaks; and Henry, feeling the strong necessity of a vigorous arm in the torrent of commotion and resistance, appointed De Courcy to the government.

Donald O'Brien, Prince of Thomond.

DIED A.D. 1194.

THIS chief is famous among the Irish writers, and was popular in his day. He occupies an equal place in the history of the troubles of this period, and in the annals of the Irish church. He was among the first of the Irish princes who submitted to the English—a step for which his character has suffered some unjust reprehension, from the inconsiderate nationality of some of our most respectable authorities. To enter on the subject here would involve us in needless repetition, as we shall have occasion to weigh the force of such opinions, once for all, in our life of Roderic O'Connor, who, in the same manner, has been grossly misrepresented.

Donald succeeded, on the death of his brother, to the kingdom of Thomond, in 1168. To this he soon added the kingdom of Ormond, which he took from his brother Brian, whom he deprived of his eyes; he thus became sole chief of north Munster. Two years after, he became involved in hostilities with Roderic O'Connor, against whom he was assisted by Fitz-Stephen, an alliance by which the English gained a footing in Munster. In the following year, he took the oath of allegiance to king Henry; but, conceiving soon that he was likely to lose his independence, and to have his territory endangered—or, more probably, taking up a tone of opposition from the surrounding chiefs—he appears, in 1173, engaged in repeated struggles with the English. In this year, he destroyed the castle of Kilkenny, and made various destructive incursions upon the English lands. In 1175, he was dethroned by Roderic, and his brother raised to his throne; but, on making submission, he was, in the following year, restored.

He died in 1194, king of all Munster. He left many sons, and is celebrated by ecclesiastical writers. His monastic foundations were many;* among these the most important to mention are the cathedrals

* Lodge, i. 14.

of Limerick and Cashel. The latter of these occupied the site of the king's palace, and included the venerable ancient structure called Cormac's chapel, which was, from the new erection, allotted to the purpose of a chapter house.*

Roderic.

DIED A. D. 1198.

WE shall offer not more than a brief outline of the life of Roderic. All the incidents of his eventful reign which can now have much interest for any one but the antiquary, have been fully related in the preceding memoirs, in their more important connexion with the main events of this period of Irish biography. That which is peculiar to the history of a native chief, belongs to an order of events and a state of society in which few can feel any interest, and of which the record is meagre and of doubtful authority. Yet the often slighted memory of the last of Ireland's monarchs demands the tribute of a memorial from the justice of the impartial historian. It is difficult to do historic justice to the memory of a name which has been the subject of unwarranted reproach or slight, according to the patriotism or the timidity of different writers, whose disrespectful comments are not borne out by the facts they state. To these statements we have no objection to offer; but when, in the course of these memoirs, they have come before us in the order of narration, we have been so free as to divest them of the tone of misrepresentation, from which even Leland—who sat down to the undertaking of Irish history in the most historical spirit—is not free. The ruling national spirit of our age is faction, to which we might apply all that Scott says of a softer passion:

“ In peace it tunes the shepherd's reed,
In war it mounts the warrior's steed.”

In peace or war, amity or opposition, praise or condemnation, party spirit is diffused through all the functions of society. Few speakers or writers seem to have retained the clearness of vision which can see facts and the actions of men, unless through the medium of the system of politics with which the mind is jaundiced in the heat of party: a mist of liberalism, or of toryism, sits like an atmosphere round every alert and intelligent actor and thinker; and nothing is looked on but as it seems to bear relation to the creed of either party. If any one have the fortune (or misfortune) to have preserved that intellectual indifference which seldom, perhaps, belongs to the highest order of minds; there is still the fear of opinion, and the respect for individuals, to draw the judgment aside, and to draw from fear the concession to which opinion gives no sanction—a weakness the more dangerous, because there is no modern history, and least of all our own, in which a rigidly impartial writer can avoid alternately drawing down the reprehension of either party; nor can any one, with perfect impunity, presume to

* Moore.

redeem historical composition from some of the worst defects of an electioneering pamphlet. There is yet, in the history of the period to which Roderic belongs, an error still more prejudicial, founded on the same principle in nature.

Dr Leland, after some comments on the subject of the following memoir, in which we can hardly believe him to have been quite sincere, adds a reflection, which contains the true answer to all such strictures on the lives of ancient men. "It would be rash to form the severest opinion of this [the military] part of his conduct, as we are not distinctly informed of the obstacles and difficulties he had to encounter. The Irish annalists who record his actions were little acquainted with intrigues of policy or faction, and little attentive to their operations. They confine themselves to the plain exposition of events; tell us of an insurrection, a victory, or a retreat; but never think of developing the secret causes that produced or influenced these events."* But in addition to this fair admission, there is a weightier and more applicable truth, from its nature less popular, yet not less to be admitted by every candid mind. It is this—that the progress of historical events, and the changes of circumstances in the social state, develop and mature new feelings, which in their accumulated effects at remote intervals, amount to a serious difference in the moral nature of the men of different periods. The social state, with all its divisions of sect and civil feud, is now so far cemented into one, that a moral impulse can be made to vibrate through all its arteries, and awaken the intensest national sympathy, on any subject that can be extricated from exclusive locality. Certain opinions have grown into feelings of human nature, and have taken such deep root in the mind, that it has ceased to have the power of dismissing them, even when they are not applicable. Among these is the strong impression of sect, faction, country, and common cause, which are principles developed, not only by civilization, and by reflection or moral culture, but by even those accidental circumstances which may happen to diffuse a sense of common interests, or admitted relation, or in any way create a community. They who look on the past, as most will, only through the medium of the present; who see their own impressions reflected upon the obscure distance of antiquity, and mistake them for the mind of the remote rude ancestors of the land; must find a very pardonable difficulty in realizing to themselves the fact, that in the period of king Roderic, there was no community, no national cause, no patriotism, in the operative social elements of Ireland. Such notions belonged to poetry, or figured in the periods of rhetoric, and were perhaps recognised as fine sayings by the hearers, and meant for nothing more by the speakers. But they had no foundation in the actual state of things. The common complaints of the people had not yet been taught to offer themselves, in one voice, to a common government. National questions had not suggested national individuality, or a recognised common cause cemented the hostile and restless strife of petty kings into a country. "We know," says Leland in continuation, "that Roderic led great armies against Dermot and his English allies; but they were collected by inferior chiefs, many

* Leland, i. 165.

of whom hated and *envied* him. They were not implicitly obedient to their monarch; they were not paid; they were not obliged to keep the field; but were ready to desert him on the most critical emergency, if the appointed period of their service should then happen to expire.* Such was the state of Roderic's power over a force composed of separate leaders, mutually at strife amongst themselves, and only to be leagued in resistance to himself. The people they severally led, had no notion of any country but their district, or of any cause but the interest of the petty toparch who ruled them with an iron rule of life and death. They had neither property or freedom, or (be it frankly said) *national* existence. Nor was there any reason distinctly in their apprehensions, why the Dane or the Saxon, should be more to be resisted, than the hereditary faction of the neighbouring district. Their very annalists, who must have had more expanded views, exhibit but a doubtful glimmer of any higher sentiment.

In this state of opinion, which also may serve to explain in part why the conquest of Ireland was not completed by Henry, the fair observer will see ample vindication of the alleged remissness of O'Connor, against the unfounded reflections of some of our historians, and the angry opprobriousness of others. Of the civil leaders of that stormy period, Roderic alone seems, by the ample extent of his interests, to have been led to views beyond his age and national state.

Another general observation must have presented itself to any indifferent reader of the various accounts of sieges and fights, which we have had occasion to notice, that no difference of numerical force was sufficient to ensure the result of a battle to the Irish leader. In their notices of these engagements, all the writers state clearly, yet with a seeming unconsciousness, the true causes of any slight check which the invaders appear to have received in their earliest encounters with the native force. The well-laid ambush, the unsteady and yielding footing of the morass, the mazy and uncertain perplexity of thickets, the crowded and confused outlets of towns: all these afforded to a brave and active population, slightly armed and accustomed to desultory warfare, advantages sufficient against the arms and discipline of their enemy. In not one instance, does there occur the slightest incident to favour the supposition, that in a pitched battle on open and firm ground, any superiority of numbers that could be brought to bear, would have been enough to secure a victory such as the interests of Roderic would require. If we make a supposition, taking our standard from the most decided event we can fairly assume—the slaughter of the company of Armoric de St Lawrence—it will appear, that two hundred men were sufficient for the slaughter of a thousand of the native force, when surrounded, *fighting singly*, and at all imaginable disadvantage. Had the two hundred been a thousand, they would, on the same assumption, have slain five thousand of their antagonists: but the same assumption, would not in this case be admissible. For the power of a company increases by a law different from that of numerical increase: no imaginable number could stand ten minutes against a thousand men killing at the same rate. At

* Leland, i. 165.

that time the most decided resistance was from a force far more advanced in arms than the native Irish—the Danes had built, inhabited, and defended the principal towns. In the long interval between this period and the battle of Clontarf, their progress in civilization, and in the various arts of peace and war, had made a considerable progress; while the natives had been either stationary or retrogressive—the pastoral habits of the country not being favourable to advance. Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, Downpatrick, Limerick, were Danish; wherever a stand was made, which exhibited a remote possibility, any approach toward the balanced contest of civilized warfare, the Danes were more or less the chief parties in the conflict. But there was no such approximation to equality; and however the party historian, anxious to flatter an amiable national pride, may gloss over facts, it must have soon become apparent to those whose fortunes hung trembling on the scale, how slight were their chances. The appearance of their formidable preponderance of numbers may have imparted a momentary fear to the Normans: for such is the irresistible impression which connects the idea of power with multitudes. And this impression too, must have been aggravated by the calamities of a protracted warfare; decline of health and numbers, with an exhausting penury of food, during a siege in which the combined power of the nation was at length brought to bear, and all seemed to desert the hardy little band of adventurers but their own indomitable and resistless energy. But a single charge, a slight reverse, against which disciplined habits would have rallied, or even sincere good-will to the cause among the leaders, repaired—at once dissipated the cumbrous and imposing, but really impotent, leaguer; and left the abandoned monarch to save himself for better days, if such might be in store for his hapless country.

Such is a cursory retrospect of the combination of efficient causes which controlled one, who, so far from being properly the subject of imputed censure, was the last and firmest among those on whom fell the duty of resistance in that dark day of Ireland. He had been distinguished as an enterprising and successful leader, under those circumstances of *equal trial* which have always been the ground for the fair estimate of character: from this may be safely inferred, that had equal arms, discipline, and field tactics, placed him on the level of a possible resistance, the same conspicuous qualities must have been as apparent. On the other hand, a new combination of circumstances arose, such as to afford no presumption which could satisfy any one but one hurried on by an enthusiastic fancy in the calculation of success; and the accumulation of uncandid “ifs” is loosely arrayed to throw an undeserved slight on the monument of a brave but unfortunate hero, who was not only the last who stood forward in the breach of ruin, but when all had yielded, and every hope was past, alone preserved his sceptre, and transmitted to his province the power to be still formidable amid the ruins of the land.

Roderic O’Conor was the son of Tirlogh, already mentioned (p. 244). He was born about the year 1116. On the death of his father, in 1156, he succeeded to the kingdom of Connaught; and on the death of Murtagh M’Lochlin, the monarchy reverted to his family, and he was recognised as king of Connaught and monarch of Ireland, 1166, at

the mature age of fifty; and "with great pomp and splendour was proclaimed king in Dublin."* In the next year, from the same valuable authority, we learn that a great meeting was called by him at Athboy: "to it went the nobles of Leth Chuin, both clergy and laity, and the nobles of the Danes of Dublin, thither went the comarba of St Patrick, Cadhla O'Duffay archbishop of Connaught, Lawrence O'Toole archbishop of Leinster, Tiernan O'Rourke lord of Brefny, Donchad O'Carrol lord of Oriel, and the son of Dunsleary O'Heochadha king of Ulidia, Dermot O'Melachlin king of Temor, and Reginald lord of the Danes of Dublin." The whole amounted to 19,000 horsemen..... "At this assembly many good laws were enacted." His accession to power was, as has been related in our notice of Dermot M'Murrough, attended by the commencement of the misfortunes of that unworthy prince, which led to the expulsion from his throne, and the hapless resource by which he repaired his broken fortunes. The fallen O'Rourke was raised from a state of humiliation and a miserable subjection to the insults of a tyrant who hated him because he had injured him, by the powerful weight of the hereditary friendship of O'Conor. And in redressing the injuries of his friendly tributary, Roderic was not inattentive to the interests of his kingdom. Constantly in the field, he left no interval of peaceful neglect for the turbulent insubordination of his restless tributaries, or the ambition of his rivals: but pursued a course of active, firm, and judicious policy in the field, and wise and beneficent civil administration and legislative enactment, which secured him the respect of the great body of the chiefs and clergy. Without reaching an elevation of principle—a moderation or clemency altogether beyond his time and country—without being free from the vindictive ferocity, or the arbitrary rule of a barbaric prince; he was all that posterity can claim from the virtue and knowledge of his age. But his character was soon to be put to a test, to which none could have submitted without a soil—the power of a civilized people,

"An old and haughty nation, proud in arms,"

and to leave a history obscured by circumstances beyond his control, to the prejudice and the exasperated nationality of after times.

In the year 1171, "a battle was fought in Dublin between Miles De Cogan, and Asgall, son of Reginald king of the Danes of Dublin; many fell on both sides, both of the English archers and of the Danes, among whom was Asgall himself, and Houn, a Dane from the Orkney isles. Roderic O'Conor, Tiernan O'Rourke, and Murchad O'Carrol, marched with an army to Dublin to besiege the city, then in the possession of earl Strongbow and Miles de Cogan. They remained there for a fortnight, during which time many fierce engagements took place between them."† A siege of Dublin, garrisoned by superior forces, was at the time as desperate and dangerous an undertaking as can well be conceived. Roderic, after the repeated trials of the force mentioned in the annals, must have begun to perceive the

* Annals, translated for the *Dublin Penny Journal*, by J. O'Donovan.

† Annals of the Four Masters, by J. O'Donovan.—*ib.*

inadequacy of his present preparation. He pursued the step most likely to lead to advantage, in distracting the attention and cutting off the resources of the enemy. He marched into the country of Dermot for the purpose of carrying off and burning the corn of the English. His force soon melted away. Feeling that they were unequally matched against superior advantages, and depressed in spirit by the appearance of continued danger and toil without any personal interest, they demanded their dismissal on the expiration of the term for which they were bound to serve. O'Connor had no choice but to lead away the small residuary force which he could command, in order to return afresh when a competent army could be raised. Shortly after this he raised a sufficient force to march against Leinster, for the purpose of cutting off the resources of the invaders; which he did to an extent that was soon after sensibly felt by them when besieged in Dublin. By the patriotic efforts of the venerable archbishop O'Toole, he was again enabled to take the field, and the English were shut up in Dublin by the greatest force which it had hitherto been found practicable to collect. Strongbow nearly reduced by famine, and daunted by the appearance of an overwhelming power, proposed terms which would have raised the power of Roderic on a firmer basis than the Irish throne had ever yet held. But by the communion of a more advanced wisdom in the person of his friend and counsellor Lawrence, and also by the natural progress of human opinion, Roderic had acquired higher and more patriotic views than had hitherto enlightened an Irish prince. He repelled the offer with a stern reply; and chose to abide by his advantage. But his ardour carried him away from the path of prudence. He forgot the frail and evanescent material of the army he led. He did not calculate on the experience of their coldness to a cause in which they only saw the interests of two rival chiefs or leaders concerned. Strong persuasion had worked their spirit to a certain point of union, but it fell short of the resolution required to face an enemy whom they had begun to deem irresistible. A well-timed sally ended the delusion.

Henry landed in Ireland, with a force which set resistance at scorn. The chiefs, showed their true view of the expedient course, by coming in unhesitatingly with submission. One only held aloof—one only showed a front of defiance, with which Henry, having no doubt the best information, did not think it wise to cope. One chief treated with Henry as a king, extorted and maintained his title and his sovereign power by treaty, and, in fact, handed it down to his sons. And this was Roderic. But this was not all; as a sovereign he retained the sword, and while there was the slightest ray of hope, he never forgot resistance to the spoiler. His enemies enlarged the basis of their power; but meanwhile, the Irish were advancing in military discipline, for which their aptitude was, as it is now, very remarkable. In 1176, the Four Masters inform us "The Earl Strongbow marched his forces to plunder Munster, and Roderic O'Connor, king of Connaught, hastened to make resistance. When the English heard intelligence of Roderic's approach to give them battle, they invited the foreigners of Dublin to their assistance, who with all possible speed marched to Thurles, where they were met by Donal O'Brien at the head of the

Dalcassians, by a battalion from West Connaught, and by a numerous and select army of the Clannmurry under Roderic. A furious engagement ensued in which the English were at last defeated.**

Shortly after, conceiving that the time was at length arrived for the expulsion of the English, Roderic led a force into Meath, levelled the forts of De Lacy, and wasted to the gates of Dublin. On this we extract a few lines from Mr Moore's learned and eloquent work, both as suitable to our view, and because it exhibits strongly the manner in which the patriotic ardour of the historian leads him to overlook the inconsistent language which attacks the conduct of this monarch for not performing confessed impossibilities. Having mentioned the seeming emergency of the position of Strongbow, he proceeds: "But added to the total want in Roderic himself of the qualities fitted for so trying a juncture, the very nature of the force under his command completely disqualified it for regular or protracted warfare; an Irish army being, in those times, little better than a rude tumultuous assemblage, brought together by the impulse of passion or the prospect of plunder, and, as soon as sated or thwarted in its immediate object, dispersing as loosely and again as lawlessly as it had assembled." Now, if it be considered, that no inference can be brought to justify the depreciating view which so many able writers have concurred in forming of Roderic, unless from his failure to effect the object of his wishes with a force *confessedly* inadequate—it looks a little like wandering into a circle of a very vicious kind, to attribute any failure to the defects of his own character. The conduct of Roderic was throughout enforced by the most rigid necessity; and as it is hardly to be expected that he should have entered into the whole poetry of modern patriotic antiquarians, so it could still less be demanded that, with his tumultuary assemblage, disaffected leaders, imperfect command, and formidable enemy, he should be able to enact the summary exploits, which are so easy to the rapid and decisive quill of his critics.

After long grappling with adverse fortune, in his fifty-ninth year, convinced that he had nothing to depend on for resistance, and not actuated by "a desperate spirit of patriotism" [which alone] "might have urged him still to persevere;" Roderic showing a sagacity, as clear as his protracted resistance with inadequate materials had shown a heroism, wisely and considerably resolved to preserve his province from ravage, by a dignified submission on a most favourable treaty. With this view he sent Lawrence, whose instrumentality of itself carries with it approbation, to negotiate with Henry. A council was summoned by Henry to meet Lawrence, with the archbishop of Tuam and the abbot of St Brendan's, who were Roderic's ambassadors. By the terms of the treaty settled at this convention, it was agreed, "That the king of England concedes to the aforesaid Roderic, his liege man, the kingdom of Connaught, so long as he shall faithfully serve him, that he shall be king under him, prepared to render him service as his vassal. And that he may hold his kingdom as well and peacefully as before the coming of the king of England

* Dublin Penny Journal.

into Ireland, on the condition of paying him tribute. He was also to have the whole of the land and its inhabitants under him, on condition that they should faithfully pay tribute to the king of England; and that they should hold their rights on peaceably, so long as they remained faithful to the king of England, paying him tribute and all other rights through the hands of the king of Connaught—saving in all things the rights of the king of England and his.* This treaty, of which we have loosely paraphrased the first article, consists of four. The second, stipulates, that if any of the Irish chiefs should be rebels against the king of England, or withhold their tribute, the king of Connaught should compel or remove them; or if unable to do so, that in such case he should have assistance from the king of England's constable. In the same article it is stipulated, that the king of Connaught was to pay one hide out of every tenth head of cattle slaughtered. The third article exempts, from the force of the previous articles, certain towns and districts already held by or under the king of England by his barons. And by the fourth and last it was provided, that those who had fled from the territories under the king's barons, were at liberty to return, under the same conditions of tribute or service to which they had been formerly subject, &c. &c.* The importance of this treaty, as it affects the subject of this memoir, is, that it strongly manifests the respect paid to his vigour of character by the sagacious Henry, who was not a person likely to yield a hair's-breadth of sovereignty which he could easily secure or retain. He was, it is true, deeply involved in the troubles of domestic faction and rebellion, and could not have personally pursued the conquest of Ireland to its completion. And his distrust of his barons was so easily awakened, that it is probable, he thought it safer to compromise with the Irish monarch, and keep up the countercheck of a native power against their ambition, than to allow any deputed government raise itself into an independent form and force, in the absence of opposition, and from the growing resources of the whole united power of the country. This may undoubtedly take something from the force of any inference favourable to our view of Roderic: yet it still exhibits the result of a persevering resistance, crowned with substantial success, where every other power and authority was compelled to yield. Something was conceded and something trusted, to one who alone never, from the beginning of the contest to the end, laid down his arms or gave up the cause, till he was left alone—till late experience ascertained that he had no adequate means of resistance, and that his tributaries were not to be depended on in the field—till they of his own household were leagued against him; and until it became most respectable, as well as considerate to his province, to secure an honourable and nearly equal treaty, than to keep up a discreditable and unprincipled war, of which one result alone seemed probable—the depopulation of his provincial realm.

From this there is nothing recorded worthy of further commemoration, in the life of a monarch whose firm and vigorous, as well as sagacious policy both as king and leader, until the setting in of a new order of events—baffled and set at nought alike the virtues and

* Cox. *Hibernia Anglicana*.

resources of his country—might have helped the impartial historian to form a truer and kinder estimate of his conduct under trials against which he had no effectual strength but the perseverance against hope and under continual failure, for which his conduct is distinguished. He could not have concentrated the selfish, lukewarm, contentious, and disaffected chiefs at Ferns or in Dublin, into the compact, disciplined body of patriots, of which they had not one amongst them. One mistake he made. He did not, in the clash of petty oppositions and through the dust of the petty factions of his country, discern in its proper character and real magnitude, the new danger that was come upon his country; he did not see that it was time to abandon old rivalry, and to adopt a course of conciliation and combination, to give even the remotest prospect of resistance to the universal invader; instead of this he looked on the new foe, as simply one among the turbulent elements in the cauldron of perpetual feud, nor did he discern his error until the contest had assumed strength, and an extensive system of preparatory measures was impracticable. Again, he did not yield in time: an earlier submission would have saved more. But we will not extend these useless reflections. He felt and acted, not according to the feelings and opinions of modern patriots, yet very much in the same general temper; engrossed by the game of circumscribed passions and policies of the moment, he could not enlarge his comprehension at once to the compass of another spirit and another order of events.

Roderic, at an advanced age, worn out with the labours and vexations of a long life embittered by the ingratitude and turbulence of his children, retired into the monastery of Cong, where he lived in peaceful obscurity for twelve years, till 1198, when he died at the age of about eighty-two.

The character of Roderic has been summed with historic impartiality by a descendant of his blood: "In his youth, Roderic had failings, which were under little control from their neighbouring good qualities. Arrogant, precipitate and voluptuous; the ductility of his temper served only to put his passions under the directions of bad men, while its audaciousness rendered him less accessible to those, who would give those passions a good tendency, or would have rescued him from their evil consequences. His father Turloch the Great, endeavoured to break this bold spirit, by ordering him at several times, to be put under confinement. He bore this indignity, in the first trials, with the ignoble fortitude which flows from resentment: in the second, reflection came to his aid, and grafted that virtue upon a better stock; what engaged him to be wholly reconciled to his father, and forget the over-rigorous severity of his last imprisonment. Bred up in the camp, almost from his infancy, he became an expert warrior; and although licentious in private life, yet he never devoted to pleasures those hours which required his activity in the field or his presence in the council. In a more advanced stage of life his capacity opened, and gave the lead to his better qualities, in most instances of his conduct. Affable, generous, sincere; he retained a great number of friends, and he had the consolation, of being served faithfully by the worthiest among them, when every other good fortune deserted him. Years and experience took their proper effect on him; and the rectitude of

his measures had a greater share than fortune, in raising him above all his cotemporaries, in the esteem of the public, when the throne became vacant, on the fall of his predecessor in the battle of Litterhim. The crazy civil constitution, of which he got the administration, necessarily created him a number of avowed, as well as secret enemies. He reduced the former by his power: and the obedience of both had but little force, at a time when it ought to have the greatest. He had to do with some powerful men, who were of that species of subjects, that can never be gained to the public interest, unless they are gratified in their own way; a hard measure in all conjunctions, and what in some cannot possibly be complied with, as in the case before us. In his adversity, when this faction deserted the nation and him, his constancy in the public service shone forth in all its lustre, without any alloy from revenge, temerity, or despair; the usual concomitants of little minds, when stripped of power and left to their own natural strength. Fortitude, equanimity, and passive courage, dignified the last scene of his administration—*independent virtues, which have their reward in every condition of life.* His natural endowments were far from contemptible; yet he lived in an age no way favourable to the exertion of great parts, when even the greatest were smothered up in the ferocity of prevailing manners, or lost in the cloud of reigning ignorance. His abilities were as conspicuous as the times would permit, and perhaps more so than they could appear in an ulterior age of less barbarism; when the corruption, the treachery, and the meannesses of courts oppress but too often all the seeds of true genius, as well as of real virtue.”*

Fitz-Adelm.

DIED A. D. 1204.

THIS nobleman was descended from Arlotta, mother to William the Conqueror, by a first husband, Harlowen De Burgo. Their son Robert, earl of Cornwall, was father of two sons, John and Adelm—the latter of whom was father to this deputy; while from the other came the family of De Burgo.

William Fitz-Adelm was, as we have said, sent with a large train into Ireland, to take on him a government for which he seems to have had no fitness. He commenced his measures by a progress of inspection. A meeting of the clergy was assembled at Waterford, where Adrian’s bull was read, and the king’s title formally promulgated under the formidable salvo of ecclesiastical denunciations.

But the only weapon that the state of the land required was wanting. The chiefs soon perceived that the sword was wielded with a feeble hand, and began to make bolder and more successful efforts for the recovery of their power. Fitz-Adelm seemed to have little inclination or ability for resistance against the common enemy; but he had come over with a prejudiced mind; and he exerted all his authority for the oppression of those whom he wanted spirit to protect. One

* O’Conor’s Dissertations.

object only seemed to animate his conduct—extortion and circumvention, which he exercised on the English chiefs with a wanton freedom and indifference to the forms of justice, which could not have long been endured. The death of Maurice Fitz-Gerald left his sons exposed to the crafty influence of this governor; he prevailed on them to exchange their quiet residence in the fort of Wicklow, for the castle of Ferns, which was a kind of thoroughfare for the inroads of the native chiefs. In the same manner Raymond, Fitz-Stephen, and others, were, by a train of fraud and violence, as occasion required, compelled to make such exchanges as suited the rapacity or designs of the governor. The consequence was a spreading of discontent among the English of every rank. The leaders displayed their contempt and hate; the soldiers became turbulent and mutinous; while the Irish chiefs—who discovered in the venal governor a new and easy way to effect their objects—crowded round the court, where they found in the vanity, feebleness, prejudice, and corruption of the governor, the advantages over their old enemies, which they could not gain in the field. Every cause was decided in their favour; and it is alleged that Fitz-Adelm was induced by bribes to demolish works which had been constructed for the protection of the English in the vicinity of Wexford.*

Such a government could not continue long under a monarch so watchful as Henry. Fitz-Adelm was recalled. They who wish to temper the statements which we have here abridged with an appearance of historical candour, say little of a redeeming character; and we cannot but think that the general dislike of his historians, is of itself warrant enough for all that we have repeated from them. He founded and endowed the monastery of Dromore. But it brought forth no historian to repay his memory with respect.

He was recalled in 1179, and Hugh de Lacy substituted. He received large grants in Connaught, and was the ancestor of the illustrious family of Clanricarde; and of the still more illustrious name of Burke—the noblest and most venerable in the annals of Ireland, if the highest claim to honour be acceded to the noblest intellect adorned with the purest worth. He married a natural daughter of Richard I., by whom he left a son—whom we shall have to notice farther on—and, having died in 1204, he was buried in the abbey of Athasil, in Tipperary, which had been founded by himself.

* The language of Cox is strong and circumstantial:—

“This governor, Fitz-Adelm, was very unkind to Raymond, and all the Geraldines, and indeed to most of the first adventurers. He forced the sons of Maurice Fitz-Gerald to exchange their castle of Wicklow for the decayed castle of Ferns; and when they had repaired that castle of Ferns, he found some pretence to have it demolished. He took from Raymond all his land near Dublin and Wexford. He delayed the restitution of Fitz-Stephen to his lands in Ophaly, till he made him consent to accept of worse situated land in lieu of it. He made his nephew, Walter Amain (a corrupt beggarly fellow, says Cambrensis), seneschal of Wexford and Waterford, who received bribes from MacMorrrough of Kensile, to prejudice the Fitz-Geralds; and so mercenary was Fitz-Adelm himself, that the Irish flocked unto him, as to a friar, to buy their demands. At last having neither done honour to the king, nor good to the country, he was revoked, and in his room the king appointed Hugh de Lacy, lord justice of Ireland, to whom Robert de Poer, the king's marshal, governor of Waterford and Wexford, was made coadjutor, counsellor, or assistant.”

William de Braosa.

DIED A. D. 1210.

THIS nobleman is entitled to notice among the eminent persons of the 12th century, for his signal misfortunes, rather than on account of his personal merits or historical importance. But the reader of the earlier periods of our history, can scarcely fail to be aware, that its most valuable remains are the incidents which carry with them some distinct notions of a time, when manners and the form of society were so widely different from any thing now known in civilized countries.

Philip of Worcester, as he is called by some historians of his age, was sent over by Henry II. in 1184, as lord justice in the room of Hugh de Lacy, and made himself obnoxious to all classes, by his exactions and tyrannical measures. He received from the king a grant of large tracts of land in the county of Limerick. These lands were afterwards confirmed to William, his nephew, by king John.

On the occasion of the well-known contest which he had with the Roman see, this feeble and tyrannical king was for a time reduced to the most abject condition of terror and suspicion, by the excommunication and interdict of the Roman pontiff. Under this influence, he endeavoured to secure the fidelity of his barons by hostages; and William de Braosa was among those from whom this security was demanded. The messengers came to his castle in England, where he at the time resided. King John had a little before excited universal disgust and indignation by the murder of the hapless prince Arthur; and when his messenger, in his name, demanded that De Braosa's children should be delivered up as security for his loyal conduct, he was answered by De Braosa's wife, that "her children should never be trusted to the murderer of his own nephew." To the timid and vindictive John, this was an offence beyond the reach of conciliation. De Braosa himself, shocked by the uncalculating vehemence of his wife, and rightly apprehending its consequences, reproved her before the messengers, and promised obedience. But it was too late; nothing less than his ruin could satiate the tyrant's anger: and sure means were at once adopted to effect it. A demand was made for the arrears due upon his Irish lands; this could not by any means be met with sufficient promptitude, and an order was issued for the seizure of his lands, castles, and person. De Braosa, who thoroughly knew that the show of a legal right was only designed as the cloak of vengeance, and that his capture must terminate in his death, fled at once with his wife and children to Ireland, where they found refuge under the protection of Hugh de Lacy, who defied the king's resentment.

The anger of John was infuriated by this unexpected obstacle; and he resolved upon an expedition into Ireland, for the avowed purpose of reducing the power of De Lacy and securing De Braosa. It was in June, 1210, he arrived in Dublin. The Irish princes flocked round to do him homage, but the Lacies fled with De Braosa into France.

De Braosa, in the meantime was obliged to leave his wife and

children concealed in Ireland, as their removal would have been inconsistent with the despatch, privacy, privations, and hardship of so long and hasty a flight. The king soon became apprized of these circumstances, and gave orders for a strict search through the country. In this distressing situation, the wife of De Braosa soon began to perceive that Ireland could afford no secure concealment; and, issuing forth from her retreat, she attempted to flee with her children, into Scotland. The unfortunate lady was soon overtaken by the bloodhounds of the tyrant's vengeance and brought back. The name of right was again adopted and abused. She was asked for the payment of her husband's debts to the king; and, having no means for their payment, was immediately sent over to England, where she was committed to Bristol castle. Here her sufferings and afflictions cannot be related on the faith of authentic history; but there is ample scope in the known circumstances for the conception of a sad interval of affliction and terror. Want also, it is said, lent its desolating horrors to a mother surrounded by the little ones on whom her offence had drawn suffering. But we are not warranted in giving credit to the monkish writers, who were likely to have exaggerated the crime of John: the account of Matthew Paris represents her to have perished with her children from want. The *Collections* of Ware are, however, said to contain proof to the contrary,* as it appears that a grand-daughter of De Braosa was married to Geoffry de Canville, an English baron. An incident, given on the authority of Speed, is more likely to have happened: in her extreme distress, this unfortunate lady addressed herself to the queen, and endeavoured to conciliate her protecting kindness by an extraordinary present, from her Irish lands, of four hundred cows all white but the ears, which were red. Whether or not there is any thing in this description to shake the credit of the story, we cannot judge; but if the present was offered, it was certainly rejected: the royal breast, with a strong contrast of nature to the attribute of Divine mercy, loved vengeance more dearly than sacrifice. De Braosa for a moment forgot his own fears in the horrors of his family's situation; and, venturing over to England, made overtures for the liberation of his wife and the forgiveness of king John,—but all to no purpose, and he was quickly compelled to save himself by flight. He soon after died in France. Of his wife no more is mentioned; and, though we may doubt the blacker features of her story, we can hardly suppose less for her, than that her life was shortened and rendered hapless by her afflictions.

De Courcy.

DIED A. D. 1210.

THE lineage of John, baron de Stoke Courcy, derives its illustrious blood at the distance of six descents from Charles Duke of Lorraine, the son of Lewis IV. of France, who reigned in the twelfth century.

* As quoted by Leland, i. p. 191.

His ancestor Richard, son and successor to the first baron, accompanied William the Conqueror to England, where he distinguished himself at the battle of Hastings, and obtained large grants in the division of the spoil. Among these was Stoke, in the county of Somerset, which thence obtained the name of Stoke Courcy. His son Robert, was steward of the household to Henry I. The next descendant, William, also bore an office of power in the royal household; but having no issue, was succeeded by his brother Robert, whose son William died in 1171, and was succeeded by the celebrated warrior who is the subject of the present memoir.*

Sir John, baron de Stoke Courcy, served Henry II. in all his French wars; but our information as to the detail of the earlier portions of his history, is neither full or satisfactory. Among the circumstances which have any distinct relation to the after course of his life, may be mentioned a friendship contracted with Sir Armoric de Valence, who married his sister, and was the brave and faithful partner of his adventures in Ireland, where, like him, he also became the founder of an illustrious Irish house. These two knights became sworn brothers in arms, in the church of "Our Lady" at Rome, where they pledged themselves by a solemn vow to live and die together, and to divide faithfully between them the winnings of their valour. This vow they observed through a long course of service in France and England. At last they were destined to have their fidelity proved, with equal honour, in a trial of sterner dangers and more rich temptations.

In 1179, after Strongbow's death, De Courcy came to Ireland with Fitz-Adelm, whom Henry sent over as deputy-governor. Fitz-Adelm's conduct soon excited among the other English knights and nobles who either accompanied him, or were previously settled, a very general sense of dislike and indignation by his arbitrary usurpations, exactions, and selfish grasping system of policy.

Of these De Courcy took the lead in discontent and in the energetic vigour with which he expressed his feelings, and adopted a course of free and independent conquest for himself. He appealed to his friends and companions in arms against the policy of the governor, which, both cowardly and tyrannical, deprived them of their rights and bribed the natives into a cessation of hostility. He represented that, by a grant from the king, he held a patent to possess whatever lands he might conquer; and promised to share freely with those who might prefer a gallant career of enterprise, to disgraceful inactivity.

Among the warriors of that iron age of chivalric habits and accomplishments, none stood higher than De Courcy in valour, nor could many have been found to rival one who has left a name which stands alone with that of his heroic contemporary the monarch of the lion heart, among authentic characters rivalling the poetic exaggerations of romance. His strength, far beyond the ordinary measure of the strongest class of strong men, was accompanied by an iron constitution, and a courage that held all odds of peril at scorn. With these, we can infer that he had a buoyant and imaginative conception, which gave to enterprise the form and attraction so congenial to romance. The ardour of his manner, and the general admiration of his associates for

* Lodge, vi. 36.

personal qualities so congenial to their time and habits, prevailed with many, private friendship with others. A small force was thus secured to follow his fortunes into Ulster, which had not yet been attempted by his countrymen. Of these, the chief were his companion and brother in arms Armoric, and Robert de la Poer, a young soldier who had lately begun to attract notice as a brave knight, with twenty other knights, and about five hundred men-at-arms.

The first enterprise was near Howth, where they met with a severe check, but obtained the victory with some loss of lives. This fight is chiefly remarkable from the circumstance that, De Courcy being sick, Sir Armoric commanded, and was after the battle invested with the lordship of Howth, which still remains with his descendants.

Sir John with his small force now continued his northward march. It may be recognised as an incident illustrative of his character, that he appropriated to himself a prophecy of Merlin, that the city of Down was to be entered by a stranger mounted on a white horse, with a shield charged with painted birds. According to this description he equipped himself, and so accoutred, proceeded to his destination. After four days' march he reached Down, where he was quite unexpected. Nor were the inhabitants apprised of the approach of these formidable strangers, until their rest was at an early hour broken by the ringing of bugles, the clash of armour, and the tramp of heavy cavalry in their street. Violent consternation was followed by the confusion of precipitate flight. In this distress, Dunleve their chief, had recourse to Vivian, the legate, who in his progress through the country was at this time in Down. Vivian was not slow in remonstrance with De Courcy, to whom he strongly represented the injustice of an assault on people who had already submitted to Henry, and were ready to adhere to their pledges, and pay their stipulated tribute. His remonstrances, backed by the most urgent entreaties were vain. The stern baron listened with the courtesy of his order and the deference of piety to the dignity of the church, and pursued a course which he made no effort to justify. He fortified himself in the city of Downpatrick, and made all necessary preparations to secure his possession. The legate's pride and sense of right were roused by the contempt, and the unwarrantable conduct of the knight. Though his commission had been to persuade peaceful submission, he now changed his course, and warmly urged resistance to unjust aggression. He advised Dunleve to have recourse to arms, and exert himself to protect his people and redeem his territories from a rapacious enemy. Dunleve followed his advice, and without delay communicated with his allies. In eight days a formidable power was collected. Roderic sent his provincial force, which, with the troops of Down, amounted to ten thousand fighting men. These, with Dunleve at their head, marched to dispossess the invader. To resist these De Courcy could muster at the utmost a force not quite amounting to seven hundred men. To attempt the defence of the town with this small force, when he was at the same time destitute of the necessary provisions and muniments of a defensive war, would be imprudent: to be shut up in walls, was still less congenial to his daring and impatient valour. Feeling, or affecting to feel, a contempt for the perilous

odds he should have to encounter, he resolved to lead forth his little host and stake his fate on a battle. Still recollecting the duty of a skilful leader, he neglected no precaution to countervail the superiority of the enemy by a judicious selection of position and a skilful disposition of his men. He divided his whole force into three companies. His cavalry amounted to one hundred and forty, behind each of these he mounted an archer, and placed the company, thus rendered doubly effective, as a left wing under the command of his friend Sir Armoric. On the right, and protected by a bog, Sir Robert de la Poer, commanded one company of foot. De Courcy at the head of another occupied the centre. The English had thus the advantage of a marsh on the right, while their left was strongly protected by a thick hedge with a deep and broad fosse.

The attack was made with the fierce impetuosity of Irish valour. Prince Dunleve led forward his horse against those of Sir Armoric, thinking thus to cause a confused movement which might enable his main force to act. The English cavalry were immovable; and the obstinacy of the attack had only the effect of increasing the slaughter of their worse-armed and less expert assailants. The bowmen acted their part so well, that few of those whom the English lance spared, escaped their arrows. Many were pierced, more thrown by their wounded horses. When the quivers were spent, the archers were found no less effective with their swords. After a most gallant resistance, the Irish retired with dreadful loss, and De Courcy with De Poer immediately charged the main body of the enemy, which had now come near his position. The fight now increased in fury. The Irish uttering tremendous yells, fought with all the fierce abandonment of desperation; the strength and composure of the English were tried to the uttermost; they trampled on heaps of the dying and the dead, amidst a tumult which allowed no order to be heard; and the old chronicler describes, with terrible fidelity, the mingled din of groans and shouts—the air darkened with clouds of dust, with darts and stones, and the splinters of broken staves—the sparkling dint of sword and axe, which clanged like hammers on their steel armour. The slaughter was great on both sides, and continued long. At length, that steadiness which is the best result of discipline, prevailed. The Irish suddenly gave ground; and from the pass in which the fight had raged till now, retreated confusedly and with fearfully diminished numbers into the plain. Sir Armoric now saw that it was the moment for a charge from his cavalry. After an instant's consultation with his standard-bearer, Jeffrey Montgomery, he gave the word for an onward movement; a moment brought his company into collision with the Irish cavalry, which, under the command of the brave Connor M'Laughlin, had retired in tolerable order during the late confusion of the battle. The shock was still fiercer than the former. This brave company, aware of the discomfiture of the main body, fought with desperation; Sir Armoric was twice unhorsed, surrounded and rescued during the short interval which elapsed while De Courcy was bringing up his now disengaged company to aid him. In this encounter it is related, that when Sir Armoric was down the second time, and fighting on foot with his two-handed sword, many of his troopers leaped to the ground, and snatching up the weapons of

the dead which were thickly strewed under their feet, rushed on and kept a ford in which they fought, and cleared it from horse and man till De Courcy's hand was up. The approach of De Courcy now decided this singularly fierce and obstinate, though unequal fight. The Irish, without waiting for a new collision, turned and fled, leaving to the conquerors a bloody field. Amongst the many fierce engagements which we have had to notice, none was more calculated to display the real character of the force on either side. On the part of the Irish, there was no want of spirit or personal valour. Superior arms and, still more, a steadier firmness and a more advanced knowledge of tactics, decided the victory in favour of a force numerically not quite the fourteenth of their antagonists.

De Courcy, by this seasonable success, was now left to secure his ground and effect his plans for a time in security. He parcelled out the lands among his followers, and built his forts on chosen situations, and made all the essential arrangements for the complete establishment of his conquest.

The following midsummer, the forces of Ulster were a second time mustered to the amount of fifteen thousand men, and hostilities were renewed with the same eventual success. A battle took place under the walls of Downpatrick, in which De Courcy gained another victory against tremendous odds of number, but with the loss of many men, among whom were some of his bravest leaders. Sir Armoric was severely wounded, and lay for some time bleeding under a hedge, where he endeavoured to support his fainting strength and subdue a parching thirst by chewing honeysuckles, which flowered profusely over his head; at last he was carried away by four men, having left much blood on the spot where he had lain. His life was little hoped for some days. In the same fight his son Sir Nicholas Saint Lawrence, was also as severely wounded, so as to leave for a time little hope of his recovery.

Notwithstanding these sanguinary failures, the spirit of Ulster was not subdued. With their native supple shrewdness, the surrounding chieftains changed their game from stern resistance to that wily and subtle cordiality of profession, which even still seems to be one of the native and intuitive resources of their enmity, when repressed by superior power. They thus gained no small influence over the natural confidence of De Courcy's sanguine spirit. From him MacMahon won the most entire confidence. By solemn protestations, he assured him of the most faithful submission and service, and engaged him in the pledge of gossipry, which was, among the Irish, understood to be most binding. In consequence, De Courcy completely duped, entered into a confidential intercourse with this bold but wily and unprincipled chief;* and intrusted him with the command of two forts, with the territory they commanded. The consequence was such as most of our readers will anticipate. MacMahon waited his opportunity, and levelled the forts to the ground, in a month after he had received them in keeping. De Courcy soon discovering this proceeding, sent to learn the cause of this breach of trust. The Irish chief replied that "he had not engaged to hold the stones of him, but the lands;

* Girald. Hanmer, &c.

and that it was contrary to his nature to dwell within cold stones, while the woods were so nigh." De Courcy's resentment was inflamed by a reply of which the purport was not equivocal. He instantly called out his little force, and entering MacMahon's land, swept away the cattle in vast droves before him. This movement was the precipitate impulse of revenge, and cost him dearly.

The number of the cattle was so great, that it was necessary to divide them into three droves, each of which was committed to a company. The force was thus most perilously divided, and each division compelled to proceed in the utmost confusion and disarray; a space of three miles separated the van from the rear. To complete the dangers of this ruinous and nearly fatal march, their way lay through the narrow passes of a bog, and was every where intercepted by deep mires, with thick copses on either side. In these the enemy, to the number of eleven thousand, took up their ambush, in the certainty of a full measure of vengeance on their invaders. They adopted their precautions with the most fatal skill; the position and circumstances were precisely those adapted to their habits. They so divided their force, that when they burst with sudden fury from their concealing thickets, the three companies of the English were separated by two considerable forces of their enemy. They were further embarrassed by the cattle, which, taking fright, rushed impetuously through them, trampling down and scattering their unformed ranks, so that all the character of military organization was effaced, and they presented themselves singly to the rushing onset of thousands. Such was the fearful combination of disadvantages, from which it is hard to explain how a man could have come out alive.

De Courcy and Sir Armoric rushed from the woods to endeavour to seize on the true position of affairs. They saw each other at the distance of a quarter of a mile. Each of these brave warriors had contrived to extricate some of his companions. They turned to approach each other. As they came on, De La Poer was seen at a small distance from Sir Armoric; he had also been endeavouring to disengage himself from the press, but in the attempt was surrounded by a crowd of the enemy, who were pulling him from his horse. Sir Armoric (whose niece he had married a few days before) rushed to his rescue; the party who had seized him gave way; but their shouts brought from the bushes a considerable force, who now blocked up the way between De Courcy and Sir Armoric. With desperate slaughter, and with some loss, they cut a passage to each other, and seeing that the ground was impassable for horses, they alighted and endeavoured to extricate themselves on foot from the surrounding bogs. Loaded with the weight of their massive accoutrements, it was no easy task to make way through mosses and quagmires which might well task the utmost activity of more lightly equipped pedestrians. They were instantly pursued. De Courcy was quickly overtaken by one Sawyard with a party. He turned on them with his two handed sword, and being bravely seconded by a few persons who were with him, the Irish assailants were driven off, leaving a hundred and twenty dead on the spot. Another chief came quickly on with several hundred followers, and again compelled De Courcy to have recourse to

his fatal weapon, of which one hundred and eighty victims attested the prowess. Last of all, MacMahon came rushing breathless up; a stroke from a son of Sir Armoric intercepted his career, and laid him on the ground. The nearly fainting English took advantage of the pause of terror and surprise occasioned by the result of these slaughtering stands: their foes fell back to a safe distance from where they stood, "few and faint, but fearless still," having lost the fight, yet dearly won the honour of that dreadful day. They were allowed to retreat; and as night fell, De Courcy led them to a secure fort of his own. Here they were enabled to take rest and refreshment after their toil. The enemy resolving to secure the advantage they had gained, encamped at the distance of half a mile: thus menacing them with a distressing siege, for which they were utterly unprovided.

As the darkness fell, the watch fires of the enemy shining in vast numbers, starred the horizon for a wide extent with lights that lent no cheerfulness to the aspect of reverse; and the distant noises of triumphant revellings, sounded like insult to the pride of the knights who had but escaped from the carnage of that day. But at midnight, Sir Armoric with characteristic vigilance and fertility of expedient, after awaking from a short sleep, conceived a desire to steal forth and look out upon the revellers of the hostile encampment. For this purpose he cautiously awakened a few of the trustiest of his followers, and soon, without interruption, came near enough to the enemy to perceive that they were feasting or sleeping, and quite free from the fear of an enemy. He returned speedily, and rousing De Courcy, proposed a sally. He informed him that by the cabins of the enemy he could judge them to amount to five thousand; but that it was quite evident, that if they did not now make good their way through these, they should have no future chance, as the numbers of the enemy were likely to increase. These reasons were convincing; but the English were seemingly in the lowest stage of weariness, and many of them disabled from their wounds. It was nevertheless agreed on that they could not expect so good a prospect of deliverance; and when Sir Armoric had done speaking, De Courcy's mind was resolved, and his plan formed for the assault. He ordered two men to mount his horse and Sir Armoric's, and taking all the other horses that remained between them, to drive them furiously across the encampment, while himself with his knights and men-at-arms, following close in the rear, might serve them with a still more effective retaliation of the stratagem of the morning. Every thing turned out according to these directions, the horses galloped fiercely among the drinkers and the sleepers, who scarcely suspected the nature of the disturbance when sword and spear were dealing rapid and irresistible destruction on every side. Five thousand were slain, and only about two hundred collected their faculties time enough to escape. Of the English, but two were missing. De Courcy was by this fortunate stroke, enabled to supply the wants of his men. He was also, for some time at least, secure from further molestation, and sent to Dublin and elsewhere among his friends for reinforcements and other supplies.

We shall not here pause in our narrative, to detail two other fights which occurred in the same period of our hero's life. An extract from

Hanmer's *Chronicle*, may tell the most personally interesting incidents of a fierce and sanguinary fight, in which De Courcy was himself in the most imminent hazard which we meet in the strange romance of his adventurous course. The peculiarity of the battle, which took place near Lurgan, was this: that upwards of six thousand Irish, were staid in their flight by an arm of the sea, "a mile from the Lurgan, on the south side of Dundalk," where there was no advantage of ground, and, of course, far less than the usual advantages from superior discipline. As the sense of a desperate necessity makes the coward daring, so it imparts steady and stern composure to the truly brave: in this position of the utmost extremity, says our authority, "there was nothing but dead blows; the foot of the English drew back, Sir John Courcy, their leader, was left in the midst of his enemies, with a two-handed sword, washing and lashing on both sides like a lion among sheep. Nicholas [St Lawrence] posted his father Armoric, who was in chase of the scattered horsemen of the Irish, and cried, 'Alas! my father, mine uncle Sir John is left alone in the midst of his enemies, and the foot have forsaken him.' With that Sir Armoric lighted, killed his horse, and said, 'Here my son, take charge of these horsemen, and I will lead on the foot-company to the rescue of my brother Courcy; come on fellow-soldiers,' saith he, 'let us live or die together.' He gave the onset on the foot of the Irish, rescued Sir John Courcy, that was sore wounded, and with cruel fight in manner out of breath; at sight of him the soldiers take heart, and drive the Irish to retreat."

The result of this action was rather in favour of the Irish; and it was followed shortly after by another, of which we can find no satisfactory description, but that it is represented by the Irish annalists as unfavourable to De Courcy. Yet there was, we learn with certainty, no interruption to his arms, sufficiently decided to arrest the progress of his conquest of Ulster, where he maintained his settlements against all efforts to disturb them.

After some time, an intermission of these hostilities allowing his absence, De Courcy thought it high time to visit England, and endeavour to secure his interest with the king. Henry, pleased with the progress of his baron's arms, created him lord of Connaught and earl of Ulster. On his return he had to fight a severe battle at the bridge of Ivora, the result of which was such as to secure a continued interval of quiet, which he employed in strengthening his government, securing his possessions, and making many useful arrangements for the civilization of the natives. He erected many castles, built bridges, made highways, and repaired churches; and governed the province peacefully to the satisfaction of its inhabitants, until the days of king John's visit to Ireland.

In 1186, as has been already related in a former notice, the king recalled prince John from the first brief exposure of that combination of folly and imbecility, which afterwards disgraced his reign. Eight months of disorder were, so far as the time admitted, repaired by the selection of a wiser head and a stronger hand. The brave and wise De Lacy had fallen the victim of an ignoble, but it is believed, insane murderer; but king Henry, seeing the approach of new dangers and

resistances from a people thus irritated by acts of oppression, and strengthened by the absence of all prudence, thought the adventurous valour and rough strong-headed sagacity of De Courcy, the best resource in the urgent position of his Irish conquest.

De Courcy's first step was a stern exaction of prudent vengeance for the murder of his predecessor. He proceeded with energy and prompt vigour to the business of repelling the encroachments and repressing the hostilities which had, during the previous year, again begun to spring up on every side, to an extent, and with a violence, which had begun to shake the foundations of English power. Fortunately, for his purpose, incidental circumstances, at this time, had begun to involve the most powerful of the native princes in mutual strife, or in domestic dissensions. The aged Roderic was driven by his ungrateful children from his throne. The chiefs of the Maclaughlin race, were destroying each other in petty warfare, and the practice of seeking aid against each other from the English settlers, gave added temptation, and more decisive issue to their animosities.

To rest satisfied with merely defensive operations, formed no part of the spirit of De Courcy. The state of Connaught was not unpromising, but it was enough to attract the heart of knightly enterprise, that it was the most warlike province of Ireland, and had yet alone continued inviolate by the hand of conquest. He collected a small, but as he judged, sufficient force, and marched "with more valour than circumspection, into a country where he expected a complete conquest without resistance." He soon learned his mistake, though not in time altogether to prevent its consequences. He received certain information that Connor Moienmoy, the reigning son of Roderic, was leagued against him with O'Brien, the Munster chief, that their force was overwhelming, and much improved in arms and discipline. Under such circumstances, his further progress, without more suitable preparation, was not to be contemplated, even by the rashness of knight-errantry. De Courcy resolved to measure back his steps. He had not proceeded far on his retreat, when he was met by the alarming intelligence, that another large army had taken up a difficult and unassailable position on his way; there remained no choice, and he retired to the army he had recently left. Here he found the confederate force of Connaught and Thomond, drawn up to the best advantage, in order of battle. Little hope seemed left, but much time for doubt was not permitted ere he was attacked. Charge succeeded charge, from an enemy confident in numbers—brave to desperation—improved in discipline, and encouraged by the weak appearance of the invaders' force. Their charges were calmly met, and after each they recoiled with diminished ranks; but De Courcy's little force was also beginning to be thinned, and, under the oppression of numbers, fatigue itself might turn the odds. It was necessary to cut their way through the armed mob. This they at last effected with vast and bloody effort, in which some of De Courcy's bravest knights were slaughtered.

By this event, the Connaught men had the glory of compelling the retreat of their invader, and preserving inviolate the honour of that unconquered province. Repelled from this design, De Courcy made amends by a combination of firmness and vigilance, which, with the

assistance of the popularity acquired by his knightly fame and open generous temper, awed some and conciliated others, and still maintained with universal honour the authority of his master through the country.

Affairs were in this position when the brave and sagacious king Henry, worn by successive shocks of anger, vexation, and wounded feeling from the conduct of his unnatural children, breathed his last in the town of Chinon, in France. On the succession of Richard, the feeble and impolitic John, who thenceforward began to exercise a more absolute interference in Irish affairs, was won by the insinuations of the younger De Lacy to supersede De Courcy, and appoint himself to the government of Ireland. De Courcy did not fail to express his indignation at the insult, and thus laid the foundation of an enmity, which was soon to lead to a fatal reverse in his prosperous fortunes. He now resolved to attend to his own interests alone, and retired to the cultivation of his territory, in his province of Ulster. Here, soon perceiving the urgent necessity of strengthening himself against the fast rising power of fresh confederacies, he sent to call for the assistance of his dear friend Armoric St Lawrence. St Lawrence obeyed the call, but in marching through the province of Cathal O'Connor, met with a fatal disaster, which we shall have to notice in his memoir.

For some time De Courcy went on strengthening himself in Ulster, and although he met with occasional checks from time to time, still, by the most indefatigable watchfulness and valour, he not only maintained the ascendancy of his arms, but was even enabled to avail himself of the weakness of John's government. He assumed an independent position, not only denying the authority of the king, but impeaching his character, and questioning his title to the crown. In this course of conduct he was for some time joined by his rival, Hugh De Lacy. But the perpetually shifting aspect of the political prospect in Ireland, appeared at length to assume a turn favourable to the power of John. The Irish barons, were mutually contentious, and, like the native chiefs, involved in perpetual strife with each other. De Lacy grew jealous of the growing power of De Courcy, whose superiority he could not help resenting. He reconciled himself by flattery and submission to the king, and exposed the danger of allowing a revolted subject to go on gathering power, and affecting the state of independent royalty. He was thus enabled to awaken a keener and more vindictive spirit in the breast of this base tyrant. The murder of the hapless prince Arthur, which had excited a universal sensation of abhorrence, drew from the generous and romantic ardour of the rough but high-spirited warrior, the most violent expressions of indignation and disgust. These were, by his rival, conveyed to the royal ear. John was enraged, and immediately summoned De Courcy to do homage for his possessions. De Courcy refused with scorn, to submit to the mandate of one whose authority he denied. A commission to seize his person was intrusted to De Lacy and his brother Walter, who, well pleased with the commission, which thus gave a specious appearance of right to their vengeance, proceeded alertly to their office.

De Lacy led his troops into Ulster, and coming to an engagement with De Courcy, was obliged to retreat with loss. But he, soon becom-

ing conscious of the impossibility of resisting the power of the English troops, which he knew must gradually collect into a force beyond the utmost of his means, resolved to temporise with his enemies. But private resentment was underhand at work; and his overtures were met with stern and unconciliating demands of submission. In this strait, he offered to justify himself by combat with De Lacy, who refused on the plea of his own high office, and De Courcy's being a subject, and a proclaimed traitor. He likewise also offered a large reward for the seizure of De Courcy, "alive or dead." But De Courcy stood so effectually on his guard, that there seemed to be little likelihood of success on the part of his enemy. At length De Lacy contrived a communication with some servants of De Courcy, who declared their fear of seizing the person of a hero, for whose strength, they affirmed, no match could be found; but they represented that he might be surprised on a particular occasion, which they thus described:—"On good Friday, yearly, he wears no arms; but passes the whole day in the churchyard of Down, wandering alone, and absorbed in devotional meditation." The hint was not thrown away on careless ears. Good Friday was at hand, and when it came, a spy, sent for the purpose, ascertained that the earl was in the place described, unarmed, alone, and by his absent eye and unsettled gait, little contemplating the meditated snare. A troop of horse rushed round the scene of sacred retirement, and the dismounted troopers crowded in upon the astonished knight; two of his nephews had been led by the tumult to the spot, and now rushed forward with heroic self-devotion to the rescue of their valiant uncle; De Courcy was not wanting to himself in the emergency. Seizing on a wooden cross which presented itself to his grasp, he laid about him with vigour and effect. Thirteen of his assailants fell beneath an arm, not often equalled in power: but his brave nephews lay dead beside him, and, wearied with his efforts, the valiant John de Courcy was at last overpowered, and led away bound and captive, into the hands of his bitter enemies.*

He was cast into the Tower, where he remained, until an incident occurred, the facts of which being misrepresented by contemporary report, have also led historians to commit the common oversight of denying the whole. The facts, as they are most simply related, are not, it is true, easily reconciled with other more authentic facts and dates. Yet we see no reason, therefore, to affirm that the account is wholly gratuitous. The most unembarrassed statement we can collect, is as follows:—

In the year 1203, there was an active and successful effort made by the French king, to strip John of his Norman dominions. The contest was marked by imbecility and slackness on the part of John, which provoked first the earnest remonstrances and then the indignant desertion on the part of his barons. Still his Norman subjects, and still more the English, showed all willingness to second any vigorous effort of the king to reinstate himself in his rights. The king used this disposition to obtain money, which he lavished in extravagance: content-

* Lodge throws a doubt on this romantic story on the authority of a record in the Tower, from which it appears that De Courcy surrendered himself. See Lodge, vi. 143, for the whole of this document.

ing himself with threats and remonstrances against Philip, who held him in just contempt, and being exalted by success, increased in his pretensions. The Normans were under a pledge to acknowledge his sovereignty, if not relieved within a year, not yet expired; to divert resistance, and perhaps at worst, to make room for compromise, he claimed the princess Eleanor, sister to the late Duke of Brittany, for his second son, with all the English dominion in France for her dower. The demand was absurd, and created remonstrance and complaint: the negotiation, which had till then been carried on, was abruptly broken off, and John's ambassadors returned into England. Shortly after their departure, and early in the following year, the king of France sent a knight into England to proclaim the justice of his cause, and in accordance with the notions and common usage of the age, to maintain the affirmation with his lance. The knight came and proclaimed a challenge against all who should impeach the actions or the pretensions of his master. It is probable that this knight did not expect his challenge to be taken up; at all events it was a matter of no political importance. But the English court justly felt that the vaunt should not be suffered to pass unanswered, and took it up as a question of sport in which the national pride was in some degree concerned, rather than as a serious matter. The court of John was, however, as likely to be anxious about a trifle, as if Normandy were the stake, and the king was earnest in the quest of a champion. The chivalry of England, ever the first in honourable enterprise, had champions enough, had the cause, the occasion, and the ruler, sufficient respectability to excite their sympathy. They were not asked; the fame of De Courcy was known; he was in the king's power, and there was little doubt as to the effect of the inducements, of freedom and restoration, when held out as the result of his becoming the champion of the royal cause. De Courcy had been some months in the Tower, when these circumstances occurred. He was sent for, and when he entered the presence, all were strongly impressed by the iron firmness of his gigantic port, and the undaunted freedom of his gait and countenance. "Wilt thou fight in my cause?" asked king John. "Not in thine," replied the Earl, "but in the kingdom's right, I will fight to the last drop of my blood." The king was too eager for the fight, to quarrel with the distinction, and De Courcy's imprisonment was relaxed in rigour; his diet improved; and his arms sent for to Ireland. But the circumstances becoming the talk of the day, the prodigious feats of De Courcy were everywhere narrated, with all the usual exaggeration. The French champion became from day to day more damped by these communications, until defeat appeared certain. At last, unable to contend with the apprehension of shame in the presence of the English court, and those of his countrymen who were sure to attend, the champion slunk away and concealed his disgrace in Spain. It was on this occasion that the privilege was granted to De Courcy, which yet remains as a standing testimony in his family. To the profuse proffers of king John's gratitude or favour, he replied by expressing his desire, that he and his posterity should retain the privilege to stand covered on their first introduction to the royal presence. This incident, the tradition of the day has so ornamented with the trappings of romance, and this with so

little regard to possibility, that it cannot now be received by the historian with any trust. Yet tradition has also its laws, and the wildest improbability may, when reduced by their critical test, be found so far in harmony with the time, person, and general character of events, that it may safely be affirmed to contain a large residue of real fundamental truth. Admiration always exaggerates and builds tall and goodly fabrics on disproportionate grounds. Yet even in these, if they are invented near the life of the actor, even the very exaggeration is mostly true to life and character. Every one is aware of many instances of the construction of this class of fictions. The main incidents are mostly disjoined from more vulgar circumstances which are omitted, altered, and replaced by other seemingly unimportant circumstances, which are simply used because the story can no more be told without them, than a picture be painted on the empty air. That which is adapted to raise wonder, is soon exaggerated to increase a sensation which the teller has himself ceased to feel. Again, the sayings and acts which are scattered along the memory of a life, will be seized on and made tributary to some special story. The violation of historical probability is long allowed to pass, because few hearers are precise enough to notice it; for it seems a general rule of the story-loving community, that no part of a story needs be true but the peculiar incident for which the tale is told. We begin to fear the charge of refining, and therefore we will pass to the subsequent facts of the tale.

Our authority goes on to state, that sometime after De Courcy being in France, serving in the English army, king Philip expressed to king John a curiosity to witness some proof of the strength of which he had heard so much; on which De Courcy was brought forward to satisfy this desire. A helmet was placed on a stake, and De Courcy stepping up to it, with a stroke of his ponderous two-handed sword, cleft the helmet and fixed the sword so deeply in the stake, that no one but himself could draw it out. Sir Walter Scott describes the feat, which he gives to Richard in "the Crusaders." Nor is it so marvellous, as on this ground to call for doubt. That the particular scene described ever occurred is, for other reasons, very unlikely. But the feat was one of the reputed trials of strength at a time when the fullest development of strength, was the business of life. The whole tale, taking it even with some minor embellishments which we here omit, has this value, that it is founded probably on the real facts of De Courcy's life, and certainly on the impression of his character, which probably remained distinct enough until it became imbodied in many a tale and written memorial not now to be had. That De Courcy was cast into the Tower, is not a fact confirmed by authentic history, and the meeting of the kings is still less likely. These are not, however, essentials to the characteristic incidents of the narration. The question about Normandy was not settled in the beginning of 1204, when De Courcy must have been in England, and this is the time assigned for the challenge. Again, king John two years after led a force into France, when he recovered parts of Poictou, and concluded a truce for two years with Philip. If these coincidences and the true spirit of the period be allowed for, the romance

dwindles into an ordinary occurrence in which, however historical scepticism may ask for proof, there is assuredly nothing improbable.

The remainder of De Courcy's history is buried in much obscurity. He began to settle into the quiet of ease and the torpor of age. It required the prominent importance of a warrior or a statesman's actions, to fix a lasting stamp on the traditionary records of the time. He is supposed to have died in France, about 1210.

His Earldom of Ulster was retained by De Lacy; but Henry III. granted the barony of Kinsale, to his successor (son or nephew), some years after. This title has descended in the posterity of the noble warrior, for 600 years.

Sir Armoric de St Lawrence.

DIED A. D. 1189.

It is one of the conditions of a period—of which the record that remains, approaches nearer to the character of tradition than regular history—that its persons are rather to be seen through the medium of the events in which they were the actors, than in the light of distinctly personal memorials. When in our transition down the current of time we come to the worthies of our own period—we must ever find the deepest interest in that portion of our inquiry, which brings our curiosity nearest to the person—and makes us best acquainted with the moral and intellectual constitution; the feelings and the motives of the object of our admiration or contempt. The earliest indications of the philosopher, the poet, the orator, or the statesman—the Boyle, the Goldsmith, or the Burke; are not too simple for the rational curiosity which would trace the growth and formation of that which is noble and excellent in the history of consummate minds. Nor will the personal fondness with which enthusiasm, is so apt to dwell on the simplest record of that which it admires or venerates, be easily contented with the utmost effort the biographer can make to infuse into his persons that characteristic reality, which like faithful portraiture ever depends on the nice preservation of minute and nearly evanescent lineaments.

It is with a painful consciousness of the unsatisfactory nature of our materials, to satisfy this condition of successful biography, that we have laboured through the heroes of this eventful period. Of these some, it is true, are to be regarded but as links of history, only important for the facts that carry on the tale; and of these the biographies are to be read, simply as the narrative of the public movements in which their fortunes or their vices and follies render them the prominent agents. Thus, while we are compelled to expend pages on the base Dermot, a scanty page will deliver all that we are enabled to add, to the facts already mentioned in the last memoir, of Sir Armoric de Valence. United inseparably with his valiant brother in arms, so that to relate the achievements of either, was necessarily to give the history of both; we have, in our memoir of De Courcy, been compelled nearly to exhaust the scanty materials for the biography of the noblest and most

chivalric hero of a romantic age. The original name of Sir Armoric's family is said to have been Tristram: the subsequently assumed name of St Lawrence is not very clearly accounted for. A member of the family which he established in Ireland, is said to have gained a battle near Clontarf on St Lawrence's day; and from that event to have taken the saint's name, in consequence of a vow made before the battle. The sword of this warrior yet hangs in the hall at Howth. We have already mentioned the first battle gained by Sir Armoric on his landing near Howth, and the consequent grant of the lordship of that district, still in the possession of his descendants who bear the title of earl and baron of Howth. His subsequent career, as the companion of De Courcy, we cannot here repeat without needless repetition. Through the whole of these years of imminent peril, and fierce exertion, and formidable escape, he was as a guardian and guiding spirit to the more fierce and headlong impetuosity of his redoubted brother-in-law. In the moment of dangerous extremity, his faithful rescue; in perplexity, his wise counsellor—as remarkable for the caution of a leader, as for the heroic fearlessness of a knight: in those awful moments of defeat when all but life and honour seemed lost, the ever wakeful and sagacious discoverer of the redeeming opportunity, or the daring last resource, which turned the fortune of the field. Enthusiastic like his heroic brother in arms, but without his impetuosity; as daring, without his grasping ambition; as scornful of baseness, without his harsh and stern rudeness: Sir Armoric's whole course, shining even through the blurred line of the meagre annalists, conveys a resistless impression of high knightly valour and faith, calm, resolute, and devoted. He showed, in his last heroic field, one of the most noble on record; the same calm intrepidity in resigning his life to a high yet punctilious sense of honour, that brave men have been often praised for exhibiting in self-defence.

In the reign of Richard, while De Courcy was superseded by his rival De Lacy, and anxious to strengthen himself in Ulster against the rising storm which in its progress so fatally overwhelmed his fortunes, he sent a messenger to Sir Armoric who was engaged in some slight enterprise in the west. Sir Armoric returned on his way, to come to the assistance of the earl, with a small force of thirty knights and two hundred foot. The report of his march came to Cathal O'Connor, who instantly resolved to intercept him, and collected for this purpose a force which left no odds to fortune. He laid his measures skilfully; and this, it will be remembered, was the science of the Irish warfare. He took up a concealed position, and by the most cautious dispositions for the purpose, prevented all intelligence of his intent or movements from reaching Sir Armoric. He came on unsuspecting danger and having no intimation of any hostile design; his scouts went out and brought no intelligence, and all seemed repose along the march, until he came to a pass called the "Devil's mouth." Here it was at once discovered, that a vast force lay in ambush to intercept his way. That there was no alternative left but a soldier's death for the two hundred foot soldiers which composed his army, was instantly comprehended by all present: for these, flight was impossible and resistance hopeless. The force of O'Connor was at least a hundred to one. The fatal in-

ference seemed to have different effects on the little force of Sir Armoric: the foot, with stern and calm desperation, prepared for their last earthly expectation of vengeance; the thirty knights, seeing that there was no hope in valour, expressed their natural desire to retreat. Their hesitation was observed by the devoted company of foot, who looked on their more fortunate companions with wistful sadness. Their captain, a brother of Sir Armoric's, came up to him, and in pathetic terms remonstrated against the intended movement of his cavalry to desert their comrades in this trying hour.

Sir Armoric's high spirit was but too easily moved to follow even the shadows of honour and fidelity; and he resolved at once to share in the dark fate of his unfortunate soldiers. He instantly proposed the resolution to his thirty knights, who yielded to the energy of their leader's resolution and consented to follow his example. Sir Armoric now alighted from his horse, and kneeling down, kissed the cross upon his sword; the next moment he turned to his horse, and exclaiming "Thou shalt not serve my enemies," he ran it through with his sword: all followed the example of this decisive act, which placed them at once in the same circumstances with their fellow soldiers. Sir Armoric, lastly, sent two youths of his company to the top of a neighbouring hill, enjoining them to witness and carry a faithful account of the event to De Courcy.

The knights now took their places among the foot, and the devoted band advanced upon the Irish host. The Irish were astonished. Altogether ignorant of the more refined barbarism of chivalric points of honour, they knew not how to understand the spectacle of devoted bravery which passed before them, but imagined that the English came on in the confidence of a seasonable reinforcement. Under this impression they hesitated, until the scouts they sent out returned with assurance that the whole enemy they had to encounter consisted of the little band of foot who were in their toils. They now gave the onset: the English were soon enclosed in their overwhelming ranks. With their gallant leader, they were slain to a man; but not without giving a lesson of fear to the enemy, which was not soon forgotten. Cathal O'Connor, some time after, described the struggle to Hugh De Lacy. He did not believe that any thing to equal it "was ever seen before:" the English, he said, turned back to back and made prodigious slaughter, till by degrees, and at great sacrifice of life, every man fell. They slew a thousand of his men, which amounted nearly to five for each who fell in that bloody fight. Such was the death of Sir Armoric Tristram de Valence.

Hugh O'Nial of Tir Owen.

A. D. 1215.

OF the secondary class of Irish chieftains, who lived in this period, nothing is distinctly known, but as their names are occasionally brought into historical distinctness by their occurrence in the feuds, battles,

and rebellions of the time. Amongst these casual notices there occurs much to excite regret that more abundant and distinct information cannot be found in any unquestionable forms; as it must be admitted that, unless in the point of military skill, the little we can discover of their actions may bear a not discreditable comparison with the most renowned and successful of their invaders. The characteristic features are, indeed, in some respects, so different, that such a comparison can hardly be made without the suspicious appearance of over-refining. But a closer inspection must remove something of this difficulty; because, when we scrutinize the conduct of our English barons to find the true indication of the virtues ascribed to chivalry, unfavourable allowances are to be largely made for the action of influences arising from their position as conquerors, holding their territories by continued violence, engaged incessantly in small yet irritating hostilities, possessed of enormous power, and tempted by constant opportunities to enlarge it. If, among the native chiefs, there occurs little that can be viewed with less reproach, equal allowances must be made on the score of the similar pernicious influences; while some indulgence must be thrown into the scale for the natural workings of pride and resentment. The comparison, indeed, has little to recommend it; its best points, on either side, are scarcely to be ranked under the predicament of virtues; but the lower the level on the scale of civilization, to which either side must be referred, the more signal are the examples of prudence and honour of which individual instances occur from time to time.

The main difference consists rather in the different means which we have of attaining to any thing of distinct knowledge of the personal history of the individuals of either class. The Irish chiefs have their record in a class of writers who, of all that ever held the pen of history, have left least information to after times. Barely confined to the dry mention of a fact, in the fewest words, and without description or detail, their accounts are nothing more than the brief entry of a chronological table. It is only incidentally that their names and actions occur in the diffuse page of Cambrensis, who, with all his misconceptions and prejudices, is the only historian from whom either the detail or colour of the time can be known, so far as regards Irish history. Of the English barons, we have abundant means of tracing the genealogy and verifying the biography in the more distinct records and documents of the English history of the same period; while of the Irish, we can only pretend to be so far distinct as their intercourse with the English barons places their names and actions in a clear point of view.

Such are the reasons why we have found it convenient to confine our plan, so far as respects these illustrious persons, to such of them as have a prominent place in the history of the English; and of these, to that portion of their history which thus appertains to the history of the settlement.

Among these, a prominent place cannot be denied to the O'Nalls of Tyrone. Of these, as the first we meet whose name occurs in this period, may be mentioned the chief of Tyrone, who had nearly fallen a victim to the cause of Cathal O'Connor, when he was deprived of his kingdom by De Burgo, in favour of his rival Carragh. To the cir-

cumstances of this part of his we shall have to revert;—worsted in the field by De Burgo, he was deposed by his angry subjects, and another chieftain of his family elected.

This chieftain fell in the action, which soon followed, with the people of Tir Connel; but a considerable time elapsed before O'Nial regained his rights. In this he succeeded by means easily conjectured, but of which we have no detail; and some time elapses before we again meet him on the occasion of king John's visit to Ireland, in 1210. On this occasion, it is mentioned that he refused to present himself before the king, unless on the condition of being secured by two hostages for his safe-conduct. The terms of his submission to the English crown were then settled apparently to his own satisfaction, and he was peaceably dismissed; but, with the characteristic uncertainty of his countrymen, he no sooner found himself secure in his own territory, than he dismissed all idea of submission and spurned a demand of hostages from the king. The consequences of this boldness were averted by the timidity and feebleness of John, whose spirit was not roused by a bold defiance from the chief, as he marched through his territory. His chastisement was committed to the garrisons on the frontiers of the English districts, but the force, on either side, was too nearly balanced for any decided result; and this the more so, as the English, few in number and unprepared for extended operations, were confined to the defensive. O'Nial had the advantage of selecting the occasion and point of attack, and generally contrived to obtain some petty advantage, too slight to have any consequence, but sufficient to be exaggerated by the pride and jealous enthusiasm of his people and the magnifying power of report, into the name of victory. With the aid of the neighbouring chiefs, more decided results might have followed from the pertinacious hostility of this spirited chief; but the neighbouring chiefs were engaged in mutual strifes and animosities.

The next incident in which he is to be traced is in a combination with Hugh de Lacy, in which he gave assistance to that ambitious and turbulent chief, in his attempts to possess himself of some territory belonging to William, earl Marshall. Not many years after, his influence is apparent in the election of Tirlogh O'Conor, on the death of Cathal—an election which was defeated in favour of another brother, of which we shall have occasion to speak.

Of the death of Hugh O'Nial, we have no means of fixing the precise date; but from those we have noticed, the time of his appearance on the scene of Irish politics may be somewhat between 1190 and 1215.

There are some curious remains of the ancient rank and grandeur of this family, of whom we shall have to notice some of the descendants. The *Dublin Penny Journal*, to which we have already been indebted for valuable information on Irish antiquities, gives a woodcut of the coronation chair of one of the branches of this family—the O'Nials of Castlereagh*; and in the same place mentions, that “there was, and probably still is, another stone chair on which the O'Nials of Tyrone, the chief branch of the family, were inaugurated. It is marked in some

* Vol. i. p. 208.—The monument here mentioned has been purchased by R. C. Walker, Esq. of Rath Carrick.

of our old maps, under the name of the "stone where they make the O'Nialls." In the same page of this work, there is also a curious representation of the ancient arms of the family:—a "bloody hand, from an impression of the silver signet ring of the celebrated Turlogh Lynnoch. It was found, a few years ago, near Charlemont, in the county of Armagh."^{*}

Meiler Fitz-Henry.

DIED A. D. 1220.

MEILER FITZ-HENRY, the grandson of king Henry I., and one of the original adventurers under Strongbow, was amongst the bravest and most distinguished of these hardy soldiers of fortune. There were few of the most trying perils and signal enterprises, which have been related in the course of these lives, in which this illustrious warrior did not bear a distinguished part.

He comes more distinctly under our notice in 1199,[†] when he was appointed by king John to succeed Hamo de Valois, as chief governor of Ireland—a situation to which he was recommended by his valour, moderation, and justice. He was but ill supported in his administration, and consequently was compelled to remain for some time almost inactive, while the south and west were torn by the dissension and turbulent schemes of both the native chiefs and English barons.

It was at this time that William de Burgo, invested with the custody of Limerick, took advantage of this and other circumstances to raise himself into great power, and with singular caprice to interfere with the succession of the Connaught princes—pulling down Cathal and Carragh by turns, according as flattery and promises swayed his inconstancy, as will be seen in our memoir of Cathal. At last Meiler raised an efficient force, and, by his prudence and conduct, obtained decided advantages over these contending chiefs—conciliating some and repressing others by the unusual demonstration of vigour in the government. He formed an alliance with Cathal and O'Brien, obtained a cession of two-thirds of Connaught, and deprived De Burgo of Limerick. The king invested him with the rents and profits of the Connaught districts thus acquired by the voluntary cession of Cathal, for the purpose of improving this territory.[‡]

He was recalled to England in 1203, and succeeded by Hugh de Lacy; but came over again in 1205. It was in the interval that the reverses of De Courcy, already related, took place. And it was at the period of his return, that the tragical history of the unfortunate De Braosa occurred.

Meiler Fitz-Henry died about 1220, and was interred in an abbey of his own foundation at Conal. Cox, Leland, and other historians call him son of Henry I., we rather presume, from not having thought it worth while to calculate the probability, upon so trifling a point.

^{*} Vol. i. p. 208.

[†] 1200. Cox.

[‡] *Ex Arch. Turr. Lond.* quoted by Leland at length.

Gordon calls him grandson, and Mr Moore, in his history, says "another of the descendants of the fair Nesta, and nephew of Maurice Fitzgerald." This is unquestionably the correct statement. Nesta was married in 1112, to Gerald of Windsor, after having first been mistress to Henry, and lastly married to Stephen. If therefore Meiler had been the offspring of the first of these connexions, he should, *at the lowest*, be 110 years of age at his death, and not less than 61 when he is described as a gallant young warrior, distinguishing himself by his personal prowess in the field. This is on the nearly impossible allowance of two years for the three successive alliances. Our peculiar office will excuse this unimportant statement.

Cathal O'Conor.

DIED A. D. 1223.

On the death of the last of Ireland's monarchs, there was for some time a violent and bloody contention for the provincial throne. Connor Moienmoy was elected, but immediately after met with his death by the hand of one of his brothers, who in his turn was slain by the son of Moienmoy; and the province was again plunged into contention, until at last the vigour and interest of Cathal O'Conor, a son of Roderick, succeeded in fixing him upon the throne.

Cathal was a prince of active and warlike temper, and had already acquired renown by his personal prowess, and by the many homicides which had gained him the title of the bloody hand. He soon increased his popularity by the demonstration of military ardour, and by his loud declarations and active preparations against the English settlers. He spoke with confidence of their expulsion, and promised the speedy restoration of the monarchy. These threats were rendered not chimerical, by the dissensions of the Irish barons and the weakness of the government; and many other native chiefs, impressed by the vigour of Cathal's preparations, consented to act in concert with him. With this view, long standing animosities were laid aside, and treaties of amity and co-operation were entered upon to support a leader who spoke the language of patriotism, and came forward in the common cause. Among these the princes of Desmond and Thomond were the most prominent; their mutual enmity, imbibed by the constant encroachments of neighbourhood, was adjourned, and they agreed to join in the support of Cathal.

The first fruit of this new combination, was that affecting and tragic battle at Knockniag, near Tuam, in which the renowned knight Armoric de St Lawrence, with two hundred foot and thirty horse, were surrounded by Cathal's army and slaughtered, at the cost to the victor of a thousand men.*

Little creditable as this event was to the arms, the generosity, or even common humanity of the Irish prince, it had the effect of exciting the ardour and the emulation of his allies. O'Brien, the prince of Tho-

* See page 322, where the particulars are given.

mond, raised a considerable force, and soon met the English on the field of Thurles, where he gained a slight victory. Such advantages were not of a decisive character; won by surprises, and by the advantage of overwhelming numbers, they had no weight in the scale of general results; they gave impulse to these excitable but inconstant and unsteady warriors; and while they had the effect of leading them on to aggravated misfortunes, they caused to the English infinite inconvenience, which eventually were compensated by increased acquisitions. The only result of O'Brien's victory was an increase of vigour, caution, and determination on the part of the enemy, who extended their depredations into the territory of Desmond, and multiplied their forts to an extent that struck general alarm into the Irish of that district. The Irish annalists are supported by the abbot of Peterborough in the affirmation, that the English practised great cruelties on the family of O'Brien when, not long after his death, they penetrated into Thomond.*

Cathal was soon apprized of their progress, and of these unusual atrocities with which it was accompanied. He entered Munster at the head of a numerous force. The English retired at his approach: they had no force adequate to the encounter. Cathal followed up the advantage thus gained by destroying their forts, "to the surprise," says Leland, "and admiration of his countrymen, who expected nothing less than the utter extirpation of their enemies, from a young warrior in all the pride of fortune and popular favour."† Cathal's judgment was however far inferior to his courage and activity, and his means of continued opposition lower still. Having executed this incomplete achievement, he retired to his province and left the contested territories to the more deliberate arms and steadier valour of the English. They were not however in this instance allowed to profit by his negligence, as Macarthy of Desmond interrupted their attempts to reinstate themselves in the same territories; this brave chief leading his army to meet them on their return, gave them a decided overthrow in the field, and followed up his success with a prudence, activity, and skill, which compelled them to evacuate the county of Limerick. The result of this bold and decisive step was to secure this territory for some years longer, until the city of Limerick was granted in custody to William de Burgo, who quickly gained possession of it, and thus effected a settlement which threatened all Munster.

In this juncture, Cathal was rendered inactive by the increasing distractions of his own province. He had no prudence to enable him to satisfy the exaggerated expectations to which his fiery courage had given rise. The admiration occasioned by his first active steps had subsided into disappointment; and as the loud applause of popular excitement died away, the longer-breathed murmurs of enmity, jealousy, disappointed ambition and revenge, like sure and steady bloodhounds, began to be heard louder and louder in his own province, and around his court. A vigorous and daring rival collected and concentrated these elements of faction. But Carragh O'Connor found a surer and shorter way to supplant his rival than in the intrigues of a court, or in reliance on the fickle and divided hostility of the natives. He ad-

* Leland.

† Ib. i. c. 5.

dressed himself secretly to De Burgo. Cathal had pursued, with some success, a course which necessarily led to a dangerous hostility with De Burgo. The claims of this powerful baron in Connaught were such as Cathal could not be presumed to acquiesce in: but Carragh promised to invest the baron with all the lands to which he laid claim by the grant of John, and thus engaged his powerful aid against Cathal.

Under the guidance of De Burgo, the enterprise was conducted with a celerity which outran all intelligence of their movements; and Cathal, surprised in his court, was obliged to consult his personal safety by flight. Carragh was thus, without a blow, put into possession of the throne of Connaught. The exiled prince took refuge with O'Niall of Tyrone. The surrounding chiefs were filled with surprise and indignation, at the success of an outrage equally atrocious in its object, and dangerous in its means. A powerful confederacy was formed to redress a wrong which thus called with equal force upon their prudence and humanity. But now by experience aware of the inutility of coping in the field with an English baron of the power of De Burgo, they adopted the expedient which, though in the first instance dangerous, was in theirs an essential part of prudence, and entered into treaty with De Courcy and De Lacy, whom they easily prevailed on to join their league. The two armies, led by De Burgo on one side, and on the other by De Courcy and De Lacy, soon met; the English force on either side gave obstinacy to the combat, and it was after a struggle of some duration, and contested with great valour and much loss on either side, that at length the troops of De Burgo and his ally obtained a decided victory. Thus was Cathal seemingly as far as ever from redress, and Carragh's usurpation confirmed to all appearance by success.

O'Niall of Tyrone was reduced to a condition equally deplorable with that of Cathal. His English allies were yet smarting from their recent defeat, and now involved in troubles of their own; but he had still a considerable faction in Connaught, and he did not desert himself. De Burgo had now raised himself to great power, and had completely broken down all opposition from the Munster chiefs. He assumed the tone of independent royalty, and showed a vigour, promptitude, and boldness in all his measures, which made him more peculiarly accessible to any appeal which either flattered his pride or excited his ambition and cupidity of acquisition. To him Cathal now secretly applied. With much address he detached him from his rival's interest, by the most specious promises and representations, and so effectually won upon his pride and generosity, that he persuaded him to declare in his favour against the prince he had so recently set up in opposition to him. Carragh was little prepared for this formidable emergency: a battle was fought which was quickly decided against him, and he fell overpowered by numbers; and Cathal was restored by the conqueror, whom he repaid with the ingratitude which his fickle caprice and avidity of possession richly deserved. Nor was De Burgo at the moment in a condition to enforce the fulfilment of his promises. The faction of Cathal had been strong, and his enemies were now under his command: De Burgo was quickly compelled to retreat with precipitation, to avoid an unequal contest. He would

have returned with a fresh army, but other troubles awaited him. The English governor, Fitz-Henry, had raised a strong force, and was on his way to Munster for the purpose of chastising his arrogant assumption of independence; and the Irish chiefs of Munster, glad of the occasion to suppress a formidable enemy, whom they feared and hated, and willing also to conciliate the English government, offered their services to Fitz-Henry, and were accepted. Among these chiefs Cathal also came. He saw the opportunity to put down a powerful and relentless enemy, who would be content with nothing short of his ruin. De Burgo was soon besieged in Limerick, and compelled to submit. The Irish chiefs, long harassed by factions and by the growing pressure of the barons, were happy to seize the favourable moment to secure their own power and possessions on the best foundation. Cathal consented to surrender to king John two-thirds of Connaught, and pay one hundred annual marks for the remainder, which he was to hold as a vassal of the crown.*

This secure arrangement placed Cathal, with other chiefs who had availed themselves of the same opportunity, under the protection of the crown, and we do not hear much of him further. On the Irish expedition of John in 1210, he appears among the chiefs who on that occasion presented themselves to offer homage, or renew their engagements to the king; and some time after, we find him receiving, on application, the protection of the crown against John de Burgo, who was encroaching upon his lands.

This latter occasion presents perhaps the fairest general view that can be collected from events, of the true position of affairs in this island, at the latter end of king John's reign.

The English barons, possessed of great wealth, far from control, and engaged in the pursuits of territorial acquisition; having also a contempt for the native chiefs, and living at a time when the principles of right were little understood, and forcible usurpation sanctioned by the highest examples of recent history and all the habits of the age; armed too with power, which soon learns to trample upon all considerations, they did not with much care resist the constant temptation to encroachment, where there was no effective resistance. Anxious for one object, the extension of their possessions, they easily found excuses to extend their just bounds, and crowds of the natives were thus stripped of their possessions. This evil was more prevalent in Connaught, where the power of the De Burgo family was greatest, and where there was least counterbalance in any native power. The greatest control upon these aggressions appears to have existed where both the English settlers and the native chiefs were the most numerous, and the distribution of power and property more equal; a constant succession of small intrigues and contentions led to less decided and permanent results. The inferior native chiefs also, were less compelled to offer to the English arms and policy a front of resistance such as to bring on their eventual ruin as the only means of quieting their opposition; and consequently, where kings and powerful provincial rulers, or proprietors were stripped of their vast possessions in the

* Archives, Turr. Lond., quoted by Leland.

struggle of conquest and resistance, most of the minor proprietors had the means of consulting their safety by a submission which was preserved by no scruple beyond the presence of immediate danger; or by a crafty alliance with those who might otherwise have been formidable foes. But to the greater chiefs such courses of safety were not permitted. The opinion of their provinces was to be respected. O'Niall of Tyrone was deposed by his subjects, because he suffered a defeat; and Cathal, defeated in the same battle, was perhaps only exempted, by the misfortunes which had already reduced him to the condition of a suppliant and a fugitive. When, however, he was, by the course of events compelled to cede two-thirds of his territory, and pay a rent for the remainder, as the voluntary price of protection, it not only exhibits the formidable nature of the dangers by which he was menaced; but may be regarded as a virtual deposition. He was undoubtedly prostrated by the force of events, which could only be arrested in their course by submission, and from the pressure of which he was left no protection, but an appeal to the king of England. This appeal, it was the policy of the English government for every reason to receive with encouraging favour, and although there hung between the Irish complaint and the throne a cloud of misrepresentation and ignorance of the state of the country, yet until some time after when other causes began to interfere, such complaints were sure to elicit the required interposition. There had at this period fully set in a long struggle between the barons and the crown, which although occasionally interrupted by the vigour of some reigns, never ceased until it terminated in the restriction of both these powers, and the development of a third; and it was as much the interest of the English king to repress the licentious turbulence and spirit of usurpation of the barons, as it was on such occasions the obvious demand of justice. It is also apparent, that there was an anxious jealousy excited at this period, by the vast accumulation of power, possession, and consequence acquired by some of the greater settlers—and the tone of independence which was the occasional consequence. On no occasion were these results more apparent, than upon the complaint of Cathal O'Connor, under the fierce encroachments of John de Burgo. The O'Conors who had been in the first struggle the most dangerous opponents, had also been by far the most ready to preserve the conditions of their own engagements, and although undoubted instances of the contrary occur, yet in that age of loose conventions, their family presents the most honourable examples of the steady preservation of faith and an observance of sacred engagements which claimed trust and protection from the English crown, and manifest in this race, a spirit enlightened beyond their period. The reader will perhaps revert to the seemingly perfidious conduct of this very Cathal, when reinstated by De Burgo; and unquestionably if referred to the morality of an enlightened age, such must be its description. But we do not so refer it; the faith of treaties and the solemn acts between kings and states was fully understood—it was an indispensable principle of the very existence of nations. But in that age of robbery and spoliation, the rights of individuals were on a different footing; Cathal looked on De Burgo, as a plunderer who had inflicted on him the deepest injury; and consid-

ered it not unjust or dishonourable to circumvent him into an act of reparation, for which no gratitude was due. It would be tampering with the most important principles, not to admit the violation of even such engagements to be quite unjustifiable on any principle; but the crime was of the age, the virtue of the individual. The faith of Cathal was, it is true, rendered doubtful by the force of constraining circumstances: he had little choice of resources. His powers of offence or defence were annihilated. Oppressed by De Burgo, he appealed to the throne. Against this appeal his oppressor advanced misrepresentations of his motives; but the case was too palpable, and the insidious representations of his enemies were disregarded. King John directed his lord justice and other faithful subjects in Ireland to support O'Connor against his enemies; and further ordered that no allegations against him should be received, so long as he continued true in his allegiance to the crown.*

Under this powerful protection the remainder of Cathal's life presents no further incident for the biographer: he seems to have been allowed to continue in peaceful possession of his remaining rights till 1223, when he died.

Richard, Earl Marshall.

DIED A. D. 1234.

IN 1219, William Marshall, earl of Pembroke, and lord protector of England, died; and with him expired the hope and promise of the feeble Henry's reign. His authority was divided between Hubert de Burgh and Peter de Roches bishop of Winchester, whose power and influence were afterwards fatal to his unfortunate and spirited son, whose fortunes we are about to relate. The lord protector had extensive estates in Ireland, and, consequently, took a very active interest in its concerns. His character was highly respected by the chiefs, as well as by the English settlers; and he used the influence and authority which he thus possessed, to preserve the peace of the country, and keep an even balance between the parties, whom opposite objects and interests had excited to mutual suspicions and aggressions.

On his death he was succeeded by his eldest son William, in whose short career began that fatal working of cupidity and bitterness, which terminated in the tragic death of his brother and successor. De Lacy, unsubdued by adversity, saw in the earl's death an opportunity to regain a considerable tract of possession, to which he considered himself to have a claim. At that period the court of equity, for the adjustment of such claims, was the field of battle. The young earl Marshall came over for the defence of his property; and the flame of civil war was thus kindled between these two rival chiefs. The strife was of considerable duration and varied fortune, while its main result was the suffering of the people through the large and populous districts of Meath and Leinster, as each chief carried devastation into his rival's

* Rymer.

boundaries. Neither party gained any decided advantage; and the contention ended in a suspension of hostilities, of which both were tired.

William died in 1231, and was succeeded by his brother Richard. He was a person of a stern and uncompromising virtue: he was on this account feared by the king, and still more by his ministers.

In the mean time, Peter de Roches, bishop of Winchester, who had been obliged to fly the kingdom under the ascendancy of his rival, Hubert de Burgh, had, on the retirement of this powerful baron, again returned and succeeded to his power and unpopularity. Hubert had been stern and tyrannical, but there was in his character a lofty and uncompromising fidelity to the sense of a trust; and he was rigorous in guarding, at all hazards, the power and prerogative of a feeble king against the encroachments of the fierce and turbulent baronage. De Roches possessed the stern, exacting, and arbitrary spirit, without the virtue of De Burgh. He encouraged the king's disposition to oppress his barons, and place his entire confidence in foreigners, until at last the affections of the aristocracy became alienated, and opposition to the claims and even the rights of the throne grew into a predominant disposition which involved the king in endless contention. It was in this state of things that Richard Marshall succeeded to the possessions of his brother William. De Roches and his master were justly alarmed at such an accession to the discontented baronage. The masculine virtues, the vigour, sagacity, and unflinching firmness of Richard were known, and they resolved to prevent his taking possession of his estates. They failed; and as a next resource, he was charged with a treasonable correspondence with France, and, on pain of perpetual imprisonment, commanded to leave the realm within fifteen days.

Richard complied; but his course was bent into Ireland, where his pretensions were still higher and his power and possessions greater than in England. The descendant of Strongbow and the native princess of Leinster found numerous friends in the national feeling of the Irish; and he was quickly enabled to return to England and seize on his paternal castle of Pembroke by force. The timid monarch and his imbecile government gave way, and conceded the investiture of his title and estates. The matter might have rested here. But their fears of earl Richard were not without foundation. The feebleness of the king, and the oppressive government of his insolent favourites, provoked the opposition of the barons; and Richard, whose bold and haughty spirit placed him at the head of the remonstrants, was, ere long, by their defection, left to support alone a dangerous contest against the power of the crown. In this position, there was no alternative between submission or recourse to arms; the first would be certain and ignominious death, but it was the spirit, not the fears, of earl Richard which chose the bolder course. He retreated into Wales, and there finding allies, he declared his purpose of maintaining his castles and estates by arms. A struggle ensued, in which the king's party met with continued disgrace from repeated failures and defeats. The cause was popular, for it was in fact the cause of his peers; and Richard conciliated respect by his conduct and forbearance. He affected to respect the king's person, and treated his English adver-

saries with lenity, while he denied quarter to the foreign soldiers who were employed against him. Wise and moderate men saw the progress of this contention with regret and apprehension, and strongly urged the prudence of a just and conciliatory compromise; but the imperious and violent De Roches was deaf to the remonstrances of prudence. He was not, however, deserted by the cunning which will sometimes effect by crime what wisdom pursues by fair and honest means. A royal bribe diffused treachery through the Irish baronage, and a well-concerted scheme brought the intended victim within their power.

A suspension of arms was contrived in Wales, and earl Richard was secretly apprized of a conspiracy to seize upon his Irish lands. Alarmed by the report, he availed himself of the truce to embark for Ireland with fifteen attendants. In the mean time, letters were sent to the principal Irish barons, which—in addition to some statements which gave a colour of right to the plot—suggested the course to be pursued, and offered the territories of the earl as the price of co-operation. Earl Richard arrived. He was waited upon by De Marisco, who, with well-feigned commiseration for his wrongs, urged upon him a bold course of open hostility against the king in Ireland, where he might hope to carry success to the height of his utmost ambition. The Irish barons had been directed to secure the person of earl Richard; but this they could have little hope of effecting without a protracted struggle of which the decision might be taken from their hands by either a compromise or the interference of an English force. To involve him in a perfidious alliance afforded a safer and surer prospect of securing the spoil of their victim, by some well-timed treachery. Such was the design according to which De Marisco urged him on into a course in which his success or failure might equally be the means of his ruin. The earl accordingly entered with vigour and success on a course of military operations. He seized on several of his own castles, and took possession of *Limerick*, after a siege which lasted four days; he subsequently seized several castles both of the king's and such barons as were not in the scheme, or whose part was opposition. Of these the enmity was as affected and insincere as the friendship: all were but acting their parts. De Burgo, the Lacies, and other hostile lords, fled before his approach with pretended fear. He was thus infatuated by the notion of an imaginary strength, and gradually deceived into a rash confidence, which brought him into the toils of his enemies.

The hostile barons desired a truce, and promised that if they were not succoured by the king before a certain time to be settled in conference, they should consider themselves free from the unwilling necessity of maintaining hostilities, and would willingly and peaceably relinquish the island to the earl. The earl's ambition was fired by this proposal, and he at once agreed to meet them; but De Marisco insidiously represented that they might only desire to gain time, and advised him to refuse the truce.

In compliance with their desire, earl Richard met the barons on the plain of Kildare; and, according to this advice of De Marisco, sternly refused to allow of any cessation of arms. The barons were

prepared for this reply: earl Richard was astonished by the fierce declaration, that arms should then decide their differences on the spot. He had now no alternative, and prepared for this unexpected trial with his native spirit and firmness; but, when all seemed ready for the onset, his fatal adviser and perfidious ally, De Marisco, rode up to him, and, with the utmost composure of countenance and tone, advised a surrender, and declined taking any part, saying that it was impossible for him to engage against his kinsman, De Lacy; and, having uttered this cruel speech, he instantly marched away, with eighty followers whom he had prepared for his purpose, leaving the unfortunate earl with fifteen, to defend his life against an hundred and forty chosen men. Nothing now remained for the ill-starred but high-spirited victim of this singularly contrived course of deceitful tactics, but to meet his fate in the spirit of the romantic law of chivalry, which made it disgraceful to turn his back on an armed enemy. With resolute composure he turned to his younger brother, who had attended him to the field, and, taking a solemn but affectionate leave, entreated him to retire from a scene to which his tender age was not yet inured. There was no long time for preparation: the barons themselves were held back by a sense of the shameful character of the exploit in which they were engaged; but their followers rushed on against the small party, who, standing firmly, awaited the shock with the resolution of men prepared to die. It was soon perceptible that, although the resistance they met compelled them to strike at many, their efforts were solely aimed against the person of Richard. He fought long and stoutly, and, with the help of his faithful attendants, brought many to the ground; but all human power was vain against such overwhelming odds. His little array was broken through; he was surrounded, unhorsed, and struck at on every side; and at last, while defending himself with that brave composure which so long made him a match for many, he received a dagger in the back, where he was undefended by his armour, and instantly fell to the ground. The object of his enemies was gained. They raised their victim in a fainting state, and tenderly conveyed him, yet alive but mortally wounded, to a castle of his own, now in the hands of Maurice Fitz-Gerald; there, according to their expectation, he expired in a few days. His death, when the manner and circumstances of it were known, excited in England resentment and consternation. In addition to the base and cowardly scheme by which he was betrayed, a rumour went about that his recovery was prevented by bribing the surgeon who attended him. This atrocity is but too consistent with the previous facts, to be rejected on the score of improbability. An Irish agent, who had the indiscreet vanity to confess that he had a principal part in the earl's death, was assassinated. The combined clamour of the people and discontent of the English peerage, alarmed the king. With mean and cowardly hypocrisy he feigned the deepest sorrow for earl Richard; lamented the inestimable loss of so hopeful a subject, with much insincere and unavailing praise of his great worth; and ordered his chaplains to perform a solemn mass for the repose of his soul. The penetration of the nobles was not baffled by these insincere demonstrations. The shock of this base murder ran through every rank, and excited general horror and aver-

sion against its known contriver. It was not allowed to subside by any prudent abstinence from tyrannical aggressions on the lives and properties of the barons. The cloud of their discontent concentrated, and became perceptibly loaded with danger; so that, when the archbishop of Canterbury took up the grievances of the barons, it was felt and understood to be an expression of the national feeling. This brave and patriotic churchman threatened excommunication as the penalty, if the king should delay to dismiss De Roches and all his foreign creatures; and the king, compelled to yield, for a time suffered the country to be governed according to law.

In Ireland, the indignation of all but those immediately concerned in the crime was not less. The descendant of MacMurrough was regarded as the sovereign of Leinster. The citizens of Dublin made themselves heard in the English court, and Henry was fain to silence their clamours by a letter expressive of the most liberal good intentions. In the mean time, the conspiring lords hastened to profit by their crime, and divide the spoils of the murdered earl. His brother, Gilbert, had pursued the same course of opposition to Henry: who was already re-entering on the same oppressive and unpopular habits: his marriage with the daughter of the Scottish king had excited his vanity, but he wanted the qualities which made earl Richard formidable, and quickly found himself obliged to sue for the king's pardon and favour. By powerful intercession he succeeded, and was allowed to take possession of his estates. Maurice Fitz-Gerald was influenced by his fears to clear himself by a solemn oath of having had any part in the murder of the earl; and proposed to show his sincerity by founding a monastery to maintain continual masses for the good of his soul.

Hugh de Lacy.

DIED A. D. 1234

ON the death of his father, of the same name, Hugh de Lacy succeeded to his possessions; and, in 1189, he was appointed deputy by king John, in place of John de Courcy. In our life of this brave warrior, we have already related the cruel wrongs he sustained by the caprice of that bad man and most unworthy prince. Of these wrongs Hugh de Lacy was the instrument and the principal instigator. In conjunction with his brother Walter, he was employed to seize on De Courcy, but, after a struggle, was defeated by him. What he failed to effect by force of arms was, however, effected by treachery. De Courcy was seized, as has been related, and sent to the tower in London.

On the death of De Courcy, Ulster was granted to De Lacy, and served to increase the already dangerous power and authority of that family. Shortly after, he was called away to England to the assistance of John, and his brother, Walter, entrusted with the government in conjunction with the archdeacon of Stafford. Meiler Fitz-Henry succeeded; but, in 1208, Hugh was once more appointed to the government.

His power had now assumed a dangerous character; and king John

was, in the midst of his perplexities at home, alarmed and irritated by accounts of the insubordination of the Lacies. At war with his barons, menaced by France, under the contempt and indignation of Europe, excommunicated by the pope,—resentment against De Braosa, and the haughty baron who, in the confidence of his power, attempted to screen him from his revenge, was the governing impulse of his actions. Hugh de Lacy took the unfortunate De Braosa under his protection, and king John was not ashamed, in the keenness of his revenge, to assign the necessity of reducing this outlaw and his adherents as the reason for his expedition into Ireland.*

On his arrival in Dublin, the chiefs thronged in to do him homage, and the general aspect of submission was such as to afford no encouragement to the refractory. Hugh de Lacy, justly fearing the consequences of the resentment he had excited in the implacable breast of John, and well aware of the serious and strong charges which his oppressions and robberies were sufficient to justify, resolved not to await the blow of justice enforced by vindictive animosity, but with his brother Walter, and his *protégé* De Braosa, fled into France.

In France, their adventures and the hardships they suffered, though by no means improbable, partake of the character of romance. In the hurry of their flight, and perhaps also from the imperfection of financial arrangements in that age, these great and affluent nobles were unable to secure any provision for their subsistence while abroad. They were quickly reduced to the lowest state of destitution, and driven to the necessity of supporting themselves by labour. It will occur to the reader that their names alone should have been sufficient to secure for them the commiseration and aid of the generous nobles and charitable ecclesiastics of France. But the revelation of their names and character, would also expose them to the malice of their numerous enemies, and quickly guide the keen-scented pursuit of vengeance. They found a refuge and the means of life in the service of the abbot of Saint Taurin, who retained them as gardeners.† Leland supports this relation by observing that De Comines “was witness of some of the noblest lords of England degraded by their misfortunes to the condition of lacquies, during the contests of York and Lancaster.”‡

The attention of the abbot was, it is said, soon attracted to the demeanour of his new retainers. Low as the age was in intellectual cultivation, it was an age of manners and formalities; it was also an age of pride and lofty thoughts: the apparent difference between the knight and the menial was far wider than in the present state of society. This difference was still more apparent in the bold and haughty nature of Hugh de Lacy. The abbot quickly suspected that his menials were persons of no ordinary rank and consequence. His curiosity, or probably his better feelings were excited, and he questioned them closely; the inquiry drew from them a full confession of the truth; they told their names, and detailed the history of their misfortunes. Their narration awakened the sympathy and benevolence of the good abbot, and he exerted him earnestly in their behalf. John's peculiar position

* Rymer, Leland, i. 187.

† Speed, Hanmer, Leland.

‡ Lel. i. 191.

very probably was such at the time, as to give weight to the intercession of a high and influential ecclesiastic; and historians attribute his forgiveness of the Lacies to the abbot's representations. After some demur, he at last suffered them to resume their possessions, exacting from Hugh 4000 marks for Ulster, and from Walter 2500 for Meath. The Lacies proved their gratitude to the abbot by knighting his nephew, and investing him with a lordship in Ireland.

King John's visit to Ireland was upon the present occasion marked by measures of considerable prudence, and, if laws and ordinances were alone enough to ensure civil order and national prosperity, adapted to heal the most prominent disorders of the country. He divided Leinster and Munster, into the provinces of Dublin, Kildare, Meath, Uriel, Caterlogh, Kilkenny, Wexford, Waterford, Cork, Limerick, Tipperary, and Kerry, to which he appointed civil officers, as in the English counties.* He left an abstract of the English laws sealed and signed by himself in the exchequer in Dublin, and ordained that they should thenceforth be observed in Ireland. After this he appointed bishop Gray lord justice, and returned into England.

The next mention of any interest we find of the Lacies, occurs in the first year of Henry III. From a writ cited by Cox,† it would appear that Hugh de Lacy, although pardoned by king John, still took care, and doubtless with justifiable prudence, not to put himself within the tyrant's power. "Another writ," says Cox, "under the test of the earl Marshall, was sent to Hugh de Lacy to invite his return; in this writ, (which runs in the name of the king) his majesty condescends to expostulate with Lacy, that he (the king) ought not to be blamed for his father's unkindness to Lacy, and assures him that he shall have restitution and protection, if he would come back; and upon receipt of it, Lacy did very readily comply with the king's desire."

This writ is further explained by another paper, published by Leland, from which the following extract contains the evident confirmation and extension of the same liberal policy:—"And whereas, we have heard that some resentment hath arisen between our lord and father aforesaid, and certain nobles of our realm, and for some time subsisted, whether with cause or without cause, we know not; our pleasure is, that it shall be for ever abolished and forgotten, so as never to remain in our mind; and in order that the effect may cease with the removal of the cause, whatever resentment was conceived, or subsisted against him, we are ready and willing to the utmost of our power to atone for, by yielding to all persons what reason shall suggest, and the good counsel of our subjects direct, abolishing all evil usages, from our realm, and by the restoration of liberties and free customs so as to recall the gracious days of our ancestors, granting to all our subjects what each may fairly and reasonably claim. For this purpose, know ye that a council being lately convened at Bristol, in which were present all the prelates of England, as well bishops and abbots as priors, and many as well earls and barons, they did homage and fealty to us, publicly and generally; and receiving a grant of those liberties and free customs first demanded and approved by them, departed in

* Cox.

† Cox, 56; from Brady's Append. 153.

joy, ready and willing to do our service, each to his particular residence."*

Far from the centre of authority, and endowed with enormous possessions, the Irish barons could not, in the state of constitutional jurisdiction then existing, be easily made amenable to control; they had the licence attendant on an unsettled state, as well as that inherent in the feudal institutions. Law and charter, were as yet but declaratory of the progress of opinion, and of the growth of that civil wisdom which must precede improvement. The Irish barons possessed on a narrow scale the powers of sovereignty, without its constraints. The monarch of a nation acts in the eye of the world, and is influenced by the power, wisdom, and virtue of his nobles; the tyrant noble, exercises his petty despotism over the mindless level of a province, from which the voice of complaint and suffering could only receive influential weight from the fear or the humanity of the chief. The sword of justice (literally its instrument of authority then) could reach but a little way in the confusion of the times; nor was it, in those days of violence and usurpation, easy to find justice uncontaminated by the motives of private ambition and passion. In such a state of things it was that the Lacies were formidable as enemies or to be desired as friends by the sovereign himself. They lived in an endless train of dissensions and intrigues, wars, oppressions, and spoliations, which the law had not force to control, and at which the government found it necessary to connive, unless where circumstances made the opposite policy the more expedient means of conciliating the most efficient servants. On this principle, the barons were more frequently employed to counterbalance each other, than made in any way amenable to the law of justice. Justice slept when deeds of the most fearful tyranny were perpetrated, but was sometimes compelled to awaken by the passions which accumulated in the course of a political intrigue. Of this nature was that execrable conspiracy of which the unfortunate Richard, earl Marshall, was the victim, and in which Hugh de Lacy, who claimed a part of his territories, bore a share. We have already given a full account of this disgraceful transaction.†

It only remains to mention that Hugh de Lacy, and his brother Walter, died about the year 1234; and leaving only daughters, their great possessions went to other families. Hugh's daughter was married to Walter de Burgo, who thus acquired the earldom of Ulster. The two daughters of Walter de Lacy were married to Lord Theobald de Verdon, and to Geoffry Genneville.‡

Richard de Burgo.

DIED A. D. 1243.

AMONGST the greater names by which the annals of this period are illustrated, few are more entitled to our notice than Richard de Burgo. He was the son of Fitz-Adelm, of whom we have already given a

* Leland, 198.

† Page 335.

‡ Cox.

sketch, by Isabella, natural daughter to Richard I., and widow of Llewellyn, prince of Wales. He succeeded by the death of his father in 1204, to the greater part of the province of Connaught, the grant of which was confirmed to him by king John, for the yearly rent of 300 marks; and again by Henry III. for a fine of 3000 marks. This grant was afterwards enlarged by a subsequent transaction in the year 1225, when the lord justice Marshall was directed to seize the whole of Connaught, forfeited by O'Connor, and to deliver it up to Richard de Burgo, at the rent of 300 marks for five years, and afterwards of 500 yearly. From this was excepted a tract, amounting to five cantreds, reserved for the maintenance of a garrison in Athlone. These grants appear to have been slowly carried into effect; in the first instance, they were no more than reversions on the death of Cathal O'Connor, who still continued to hold a doubtful and difficult state in his paternal realm. His restless and turbulent spirit soon afforded the pretext, if it did not impose the necessity, of proceeding to more violent extremities; but his death in 1223 made the claim of De Burgo unconditional.

This, nevertheless, did not deter the native chiefs from proceeding in pursuance of custom, to the election of a successor; and Tirlogh O'Connor, brother to Cathal, was invested with the royal name and pretensions. This nomination drew forth the interference of the government, at the time in the hands of De Marisco. But the hostilities of this governor were rather directed against the disaffected Irish prince, than in support of the already too powerful settlement. De Marisco having led a powerful force into Connaught, expelled Tirlogh, and set Aedh a son of Cathal in his place. Aedh, however, availed himself of the power thus acquired, for the purpose of resisting the power by which he was set up; and a contention ensued, in the result of which he met his death in some tumultuary affair between his people and those of De Marisco. Tirlogh re-assumed his claims; but Richard de Burgo had by this time succeeded De Marisco in the government of the country, and was thus armed with the power to right his own cause effectually. He deposed Tirlogh: but instead of directly asserting his claim to a paramount jurisdiction, he thought it more consistent with his ambition to act under the shadow of a nominal kingly authority, and accordingly placed Feidlim O'Connor, another son of Cathal, on the throne. His expectations were, however, disappointed by the spirit and sagacity of his nominee: Feidlim resisted his exactions, and refused to lend himself to his plans of usurpation and encroachment. De Burgo, indignant at this return for a seeming but selfish kindness, and stung by disappointment, avenged himself by the appointment of a rival prince of the same line, and marching to support his nomination, he contrived to make Feidlim his prisoner. Feidlim escaped, and collecting his friends and adherents, he defeated and slew the rival prince.

At this time Hubert de Burgo, uncle to Richard, fell into disgrace. He had for a long period, by the favour of these successive monarchs, been one of the greatest subjects in the kingdom—perhaps in Europe. He was chief justice of England, and had also been created earl of Connaught, and lord justice of Ireland for life. He was now displaced

from his offices, and as Richard had been appointed in Ireland by his nomination and as his deputy,* he was involved in the consequences of his dismissal, and Maurice Fitz-Gerald appointed lord justice of Ireland.

The power and authority of Richard de Burgo were probably not seriously affected by the change: but the complaints of Feidlim O'Connor, representing his own wrongs and also the dangers to English authority which were likely to arise from the uninterrupted machinations of so turbulent and powerful a baron, had the effect of alarming the fears of Henry III. In consequence, a letter was written to Maurice Fitz-Gerald, of which the consequences will hereafter be more fully detailed. De Burgo was placed in a state of hostility with the English government; and king Feidlim his enemy, by a commission of the king, appointed to act against him.

Such a state of things under the general system of modern governments, when the relative position of king and subject are guarded by a proportionate difference of powers and means, must have terminated in the speedy ruin of the subject thus circumstanced. On the growing fortunes of De Burgo it had no effect. His uncle too returned into power, and shortly after we find Richard acting under his commission against earl Marshall, as already described.

On the return of his uncle to power, the king had been content to remonstrate with De Burgo, on his alleged disloyalty. He received him into favour, and gently intimated his advice, that for the time to come he should be found careful to observe such orders as he might receive, and in guarding against even the suspicion of disloyalty. De Burgo seems to have been little influenced by this remonstrance. He contrived to gain the lord justice to his side; and easily finding some of those lawful excuses, which never yet have been found wanting for any occasion, they joined in the invasion of king Feidlim. The pretence was the suppression of insurrections; and under this pretence, they contrived to seize on large tracts of territory. Feidlim repeated his complaints, and the king sent an order for his redress to Maurice Fitz-Gerald; but a war with Scotland having commenced, and the king having ordered the attendance of Fitz-Gerald and the Irish chiefs, English and native—grounds for delay arose, and the storm was averted from De Burgo. He thus went on in the improvement of his circumstances, already grown beyond the limits of a subject. In 1232, we find an account of his having built the castle of Galway; and still growing in power and territorial possession, in 1236, he built that of Lough Rea. He now affected the state of a provincial king, and kept a train of barons, knights, and gentlemen, in his service, and about his person.

In 1242, he went, accompanied by a splendid suite, to meet king Henry in Bourdeaux, but died in France in 1243.†

He was married to Hodierna, daughter to Robert de Gernon, and by her mother grand-daughter to Odo, son of Cathal O'Connor, known by the appellation of Crowderg, king of Connaught. By her he left Walter de Burgo, his successor, and two daughters, of whom

* Cox, p. 60.

† Lodge, i. 119.

one was married to Theobald Butler, ancestor to the Ormonde family; the other to Henry Netterville, ancestor to Lord Netterville.*

Maurice Fitz-Gerald.

BORN A.D. 1195—DIED A.D. 1257.

THIS eminent person was the grandson of the first leader of the same name, of whom we have already presented the reader with a sketch. His father, Gerald, was styled baron Ophaly; and, as he is said to have died in 1205, and Maurice was put in possession of his honours and estates in 1216, it is to be presumed that it was on the occasion of his coming of age. In 1229, on the disgrace of Hubert de Burgo, Maurice was appointed lord justice of Ireland, in the room of Richard de Burgo. The principal public incidents of his administration at this time, were the contests between Feidlim O'Connor and De Burgo, and the hapless and shameful death of earl Marshall. These we have already related.

This last-mentioned event excited great indignation in Ireland, and threw much imputation on his government. Gilbert, the brother and successor of the murdered earl, for a little time incurred the anger of Henry III. He had married the daughter of Alexander, king of Scotland; and, possessing his unfortunate brother's pride and spirit, without his ability, he was quickly led into a course of opposition which ended in his disgrace. He was, however, restored to favour by the mediation of the king's brother. Maurice Fitz-Gerald on this, thought it prudent to seek a reconciliation with him, and passed over to England to obtain the royal influence for his purpose. He there exculpated himself before Henry and his court, by a solemn oath, that he had no part in the death of Richard, earl Marshall; and proposed, for the sake of amity and peace between the families, to found a monastery, with monks to offer up continual masses for the soul of the murdered earl. It was also on this occasion that Feidlim O'Connor came over in person to look for redress at the English court, against his enemy, Richard de Burgo.

The account of sudden commotions in Ireland hastened the return of Maurice; on his approach they subsided into a calm.

In the following year, 1244, king Henry had levied a powerful army to make war on Alexander, king of Scotland; but the cause of quarrel being removed, he was advised to seize the opportunity to reduce the Welch to obedience. On this occasion the king sent to Maurice, to attend him with such aid as he could bring from Ireland. The delay was considerable enough to give the king some discontent, which he seems to have treasured up for a future occasion. Maurice led over his forces, accompanied by Feidlim O'Connor. Passing the island of Anglesey, they landed and laid waste a part of the island; but, while they were moving off with the spoil to their ships, the inhabitants collected and came on them by surprise. They had no force

* Lodge.

equal to the emergency, and were obliged to drop their burthens and make the best escape they could.* They then made the best of their way to the king, and remained with him until he had reduced the Welch and strengthened his garrisons in that country; after which Maurice returned into Ireland. On his return he found the country in a state of insurrection. The deaths of Hugh de Lacy and Richard de Burgo, with the absence of the lord justice, seemed to afford an occasion for gaining some advantage to O'Donel, who overran Ulster and committed great waste. Maurice marched against him; and, with the aid of Feidlim O'Connor,† easily reduced O'Donel and restored peace to that district. He also forced O'Neale to give hostages, whom he‡ secured in his castle of Sligo. Other important services are mentioned by historians.

But Henry had been dissatisfied at the tardy succour which he had received in his Welch campaign; or, as is far more likely, some turn of court intrigue operating to the prejudice of the absent—Maurice was superseded, in 1245, by Sir John Fitz-Geoffrey, son of Geoffrey de Montmorres. This change revived the turbulent designs of the Ulster chief, and Sir John was speedily involved in hostilities which occupied his entire administration. It was only by the dissensions of these restless chiefs that he was enabled to subdue this obstinate toparch; the jealousies and enmities of the neighbouring chiefs afforded willing aid against a powerful and perhaps oppressive neighbour.

Maurice died on the 20th May, 1257, in the habit of St Francis, and was buried at Youghal, in a friary of his own foundation.§ Lodge mentions that this friary was built in consequence of a very slight incident. "Being about to build a castle in the town, and the workmen who were digging the foundation, on the eve of some festival, requesting a piece of money to drink his health, he directed his eldest son to give it, who, instead of obeying, abused the workmen; at which he was so concerned that he altered his design, and changed the castle into a friary, taking upon himself the habit of the order."||

Theobald Walter.

DIED A.D. 1206.

THE prominence in Irish history of the family of Theobald Walter, gives him a title to notice beyond the claim of many whose deeds and renown, in this period, have necessarily occupied a more considerable space in our pages. An old writer of the last century makes the remark, that "a family has a right to preserve its whole line from oblivion, which has produced one man worthy of a history." Such a right, if admitted, is confirmed in the line of Walter, by many an illustrious claim.

Antiquaries and heralds are not agreed in their accounts of the ancestry of this family. It is traced—without certainty, yet with no

* Cox. † Leland; Lodge and Cox say, with the aid of Desmond Hugh MacRory.

‡ Camden.

§ Lodge.

|| Ibid.

inconsiderable probability—from the Dukes of Normandy, through Richard, a follower of the Conqueror, whose name is on the roll of Battel Abbey; and who, on the score of kindred, as well as service, received the earldom of Clare. From Herveius, the grandson of this nobleman, the genealogy of the family runs clear from conjecture; he was the father of Theobald.

It is generally agreed that Theobald accompanied Henry II. into France, on the occasion of the persecution which that monarch underwent on account of the assassination of the turbulent and intriguing Becket. When the king came to Ireland, in the following year, he attended him thither.

His services, on that occasion, cannot easily be distinguished, as he does not appear to have had any military command. But they were, perhaps, not of the less importance in the council of his master, or in the detail of civil offices, which, though little important in the historic page which is occupied with gross results, are yet, in the current order of affairs, the source of influence and the basis of events; it is plain, there must have been high favour, and the dignity of hereditary station. The office of chief butler, in the English court, appears to have descended, for some generations, in the family; and that of chief butler in Ireland seems to have been a simple recognition of the claim.

This dignity was some time after bestowed by Henry on Theobald, with large Irish possessions. It was the duty of the office to attend on the kings at their coronation; and at the feast, upon that occasion, to present them with the first cup of wine. In addition to this, and probably as appendant to the office, Henry granted him the prisage of wines.* By this he had a right to two tons of wine in every ship "which broke bulk in any trading port in Ireland, and was loaden with twenty tons of that commodity, and one ton from nine to twenty, &c."† This grant was renewed through many reigns, and continued in the house of Ormonde till late in the 18th century.‡

During his life, he was appointed to several offices both in England and Ireland, and is mentioned as having endowed several charitable and religious foundations. His possessions in England were small, and probably in Lancashire, where he was sheriff in the reign of Richard I. and that of king John. His grants in Ireland were ample. Among those which Lodge enumerates, we find the castle and town of Arklow, to hold by the service of one knight's fee.

He married the daughter and heir of Robert de Vavasor, and left one son, Theobald, with a daughter. In 1204, he gave, it is said, "two palfreys" for licence to go to England, where he died in 1206, and was buried in Wothney abbey.

* Lodge, iv.

† Ib. Note, p. 3.

‡ Life of James, Duke of Ormonde.

Feidlim O'Conor, Prince of Connaught.

SUCCEEDED A.D. 1228.

ON the death of Cathal O'Conor, a son of his, named Tirlogh, was elected by the people; he was expelled by the lord justice, De Maurisco, or Montmorres, and Aedh, a son of Cathal, established in his place. Aedh was soon after slain by a most unfortunate misapprehension, of which the following account is given:—Aedh had involved himself in hostilities with the English; and, having no effective means of resistance, was quickly reduced to sue for terms: attending on Montmorres for this purpose, a quarrel arose between his attendants and those of the English baron, in which he was slain. Of this incident, a version by no means improbable is given by some of the annalists:—On his visit to Montmorres, the king of Connaught, Aedh, met with very kind attentions from the wife of one of the English attendants, who offered him the refreshment necessary after his journey, to enable him to appear before the English governor. Aedh, after the fashion of his own country, showed his gratitude by kissing his benefactress. The simple warmth of the Irish manner—which even still is observably marked with the emphasis of a fervid and enthusiastic nature, such as often to give the tone of strong passion to slight courtesy—made a fallacious impression of jealousy upon the cooler and more matter-of-fact perceptions of the English husband, who judged according to the more quiet manners of his own country. He probably watched for the opportunity of revenge, and there could not be one more convenient than the confusion of a riot, easily excited among the class to which it is ascribed. The assassin was immediately discovered, and executed by order of Montmorres.

Tirlogh assumed the sovereignty; but Richard de Burgo, who had himself a claim to succeed Cathal, for reasons not stated, thought proper to raise Feidlim to the succession. Such apparently was the course most favourable to his plans of self-aggrandizement. The obstacles his ambition feared were more likely to arise from the suspicions of the king of England, and the vigilance of his governors, than from a small provincial ruler, whom he considered as existing only by his favour, and whose name and authority he might hope to use as the mask and instrument of his designs. He was, however, mistaken in his choice.

From Feidlim, De Burgo received a lesson which belonged peculiarly to the experience of his time. Feidlim was a prince of very uncommon spirit and sagacity, and quickly saw and seized on the advantages of his position;—these are so obvious, that we may assume them safely. It must have been plainly apparent that by a tame submission to De Burgo, he could be nothing more than an instrument in the absolute power of that encroaching baron, who simply raised him to occupy a nominal right over territory which he found it dangerous to seize at once, until it should be effected by slower and more safe degrees, by means of a

succession of arbitrary and oppressive acts. Sooner than submit to such an abject and precarious footing, Feidlim preferred to hazard all; but he had caution and foresight equal to his boldness. He justly reckoned on the troubles in which the turbulent ambition of De Burgo would quickly and frequently involve him; and relied also on the steady character of the English protection, could it once be obtained, free from the capricious intervention of the barons and their dependents. He formed his plans accordingly.

He commenced by resistance to oppressive and unjust demands. De Burgo, who was little likely to acquiesce in resistance from one whom he considered as the creature of his will and convenience, at once marched against him, and made him prisoner. Feidlim had the good fortune to escape. Still more fortunately for him, Hubert de Burgo, the English justiciary at this time, fell into disgrace; and, in consequence, his nephew was deprived of the government, and Maurice Fitz-Gerald appointed in his stead. Feidlim, with ready sagacity, seized upon the favourable moment. Aware of the insufficiency of any means of resistance in his power, and reckoning justly on the effects of De Burgo's discredit, he made a pathetic and forcible appeal to the king, in which he set forth, in strong terms, the known fidelity of his father, Cathal, and his own—the extensive cessions they had freely made—the strong pledges of protection they had received—and the unjust and insatiable rapacity of De Burgo. To these considerations he added a strong description of his disregard of the royal rights in Ireland—his seizure of the king's forts—his depredations and military inroads upon his faithful liegemen—and his general assumption of powers altogether inconsistent with the fidelity of a subject. To this representation he added an earnest request to be permitted to repair to England, and cast himself at the foot of the throne, that he might more fully explain the crimes of De Burgo, and his own wrongs. This judicious step of O'Connor was successful. Henry was surprised at an account so different from those with which he had been duped, according to the consistent and fatal policy of his Irish barons and ministers, whose immunities were extended and their crimes concealed by continued misrepresentations to the crown. Of O'Connor, he had been given to understand that he had led an army of Connaught men into the king's lands, and had been defeated with the loss of 20,000 men. This monstrous falsehood induced Henry to act with caution. He wrote to O'Connor, directing him to defer his journey till he had, with the concurrence of the lord deputy, endeavoured to take the castle of Melick from De Burgo; after which service, when the province of Connaught should be peaceably settled, and delivered up to the lord deputy, he might be admitted to his presence, and his cause fully heard. In the mean time, the king wrote to Fitz-Gerald, apprizing him of this letter, and desiring him to employ trusty persons to ascertain the truth. This answer of the king's effected the immediate purpose of O'Connor, as it recognised him as a vassal, and authorized him to act against his oppressor. The consequence was, that he was allowed to enjoy his province without further present molestation, under the sanction of Henry's support. The gratitude of Feidlim was shown by loyalty and active service: in 1244 he accompanied Maurice Fitz-Gerald, with an Irish force, against

the Welch. The circumstances are mentioned in our notice of Fitz-Gerald.

Of Feidlim there is nothing further worthy of remark to be distinctly ascertained. His life had been a succession of struggles, in which his energy, courage, and sagacity, were unremittingly employed, to maintain possession of the little that remained of his ancestral dignity and possessions. The comparative peace of the remainder of his life may be inferred from the silence of historians. The time of his death is not specified.

Walter De Burgo.

DIED A.D. 1271.

OF Walter de Burgo we have little notice of a nature strictly personal. Eminent, in his own day, for power and enterprise, his actions are scantily recorded; and the events in which he bore an active part, are but indistinctly to be collected from the history of the darkest age of Ireland. With a few exceptions, such is the common character of this long and perplexed period. It presents a lengthened succession of confused and obscure, yet strikingly tempestuous and destructive scenes, of which the incidents are rendered impressive by their frightfully peculiar uniformity, and their dark breadth of infliction and suffering. But the separate agents are only to be seen, like the moving figures in some remote conflagration, as the bursts of ravage and ruin happen from time to time to cast a gleam upon them. We are, therefore, for the remainder of this period, compelled to carry on our chain of persons and events by memoirs, in many of which little can be related of the individual. These the reader will however find to contain the main events of their time, or some appropriate notice of such questions as they suggest.

Walter de Burgo succeeded his father, Richard, already mentioned. By his marriage with the heiress of De Lacy, he acquired the earldom of Ulster. His contests with the O'Conors have been noticed.

During his time it was that the effect of the absence of any fixed and independent authority in the country began to be more fully understood by the native Irish; and a general desire began to be felt, among those who bordered upon the English settlements, for the advantages of English law. The difficulties attendant on such a change were greater than can now be easily allowed for; and, while we accord with the general principle assumed by those historians who exclaim against the injustice or impolicy of denying the boon so long and anxiously sought, we must adhere to our opinion, already expressed, that it is very doubtful whether it could have been acceded to without depriving the pale of the only protection they had against their inveterately hostile neighbours. The opposition of the English was founded on two distinct classes of motive—one of which was unjust and impolitic, the other necessary and hardly to be dispensed with; and the obviousness of the first has prevented historians from suffi-

ciently noticing the second. That the greater barons would object to a constitution, the effect of which should soon be to set bounds to encroachment, usurpation, and arbitrary violence, is natural and not to be either defended or denied. Had there been no record, it might be inferred from the common analogy of human conduct; but though there were those who would have withheld justice, it by no means is to be inferred that the measure required was politic, prudent, or such as to ensure the object proposed. We need not enter upon the nice question, as to the possibility of governing any people in any state, by any constitution whatever; for such is the absurdity of the assumption. The operation of law must be essentially modified by the habits of a nation; for on the degree of its conformity with these, must depend the question how far it is a system of freedom or constraint. The law which is a security to the industrious, peaceable, and honest, must be a severe oppression, however necessary, to the riotous, the idle, and the dishonest. But if two races, oppositely distinguished by these respective qualities—an extreme case, which we assume for illustration—should chance to be combined under the same constitution, the difficulty must be much enhanced; the effect must be, to a certain extent, the same as the insane and rash measure of attempting to quiet a country in a state of insurrection, by depriving the respectable and orderly of their means of resistance, and leaving the disaffected without control—a dastardly policy too often resorted to by public administrations. The Irish were at that time, and it implies no reproach, not to be governed by English laws, and only to be restrained by the retort of arms and the sense of their own personal safety. A law of equal justice would in the state of the country have been just barely efficient to control the industrious, the timid, and the weak, with a superfluous constraint; it would have had no effect upon the demeanour of the natives, unless so far as it was their safety and convenience, and would have been quickly converted into the stalking-horse of robbery and sedition. The duty of the English government, which was first to protect the settlement, would thus have, to some extent, deprived it of its own protection; as the law designed to protect Irish life and property against English aggression, would have been by no means reciprocal. Having expressed these doubts, we have as little hesitation in concurring with the generality of historians, in imputing the resistance made to this extension of English law to the iniquitous ambition of the barons. The Irish chiefs had, in their first cession to the English crown, made it an express stipulation that they were to retain the ancient laws and customs of the country. But in this respect experience changed the view of such of the Irish as inhabited the borders of the pale; and we may admit that those who sought the protection of the English law were, many of them, governed by the most wise and allowable policy. In the reign of Henry III. it was frequent for the most peaceable and civilized among the native chiefs to sue for and obtain a patent, specially securing to the applicant the rights of an English subject. These grants were numerous, as can be ascertained by their records. The reader of Irish history, whenever such questions recur, will do well to call to mind that the Irish, in actual contact with the settlement, were comparatively but a

small proportion. The inequalities of jurisdiction, in a small settlement thus surrounded by an Alsation sanctuary for outrage of all kinds, would be quite inconsistent with the lowest civil order.

At the same period, the disorders of the Irish barons were so great, their interests so complicated together, and their conduct therefore so little to be depended on, that king Henry adopted the plan of sending over governors, unconnected with the country and its settlers, who might thus be expected to act with independence of local and partial influences and interest, and to consult only the good of the country, and the will of the king. Of these, the names follow each other in brief and quick succession, indicating thus, says Leland, "distraction in English councils, as well as an irregular and disordered state of things in Ireland."*

Among the Irish chiefs whose names prominently recur in this time, the warlike race of Macarthy is conspicuous. Irritated by the pressure of the Geraldines in the south, they took arms, and gained a decisive victory, in which many of this English family were slain. In the course of this war they affected to be at peace with the English government; and at the very time of this victory, received a new deputy, who landed on their coast, with all marks of respect, and allowed him to proceed peaceably to his government. Elated with their success, they proceeded to further hostilities, and attacked some Irish septs which had incurred their hostility. In the course of these steps they were brought into collision with the real or supposed rights of De Burgo. He took arms against them; and, meeting them in the field, gave them a defeat which scattered their power. In this their leader was slain; and it was followed up by an inroad into their country, in which he spread devastation, and compelled them to submit and give hostages for the observance of the conqueror's conditions. By this event, the Geraldines were once more enabled to lift up their heads; but De Burgo, whose interests were those of a rival, did not quietly acquiesce in this consequence, and a long and sanguinary feud ensued. In the course of this, De Burgo obtained an advantage from the lawless violence of his opponents. The Geraldines, resenting the supposed partiality of the lord deputy's interference, seized his person, and sent him, with a son of De Burgo and others, prisoner to one of their castles. This act drew down upon them a more combined and formidable power, and gave to De Burgo's violence a lawful character. But the ambition and the violence of these powerful barons knew no prudence or moderation. De Burgo pushed his advantages in Connaught, until he roused the resentment of Aedh O'Connor, the successor of Feidlim, who rose in arms and gave him a signal defeat. His death followed soon after, in 1271, at his castle in Galway.†

* *Lel. i.* 228.

† *Lodge.*

Earl of Kildare.

DIED A. D. 1316.

JOHN, the eldest son of Thomas Fitz-Gerald, lord Ophaly, was the first earl of Kildare. The most remarkable event in which he is directly concerned, is the dispute with Vesey, the lord justice, which ended in a large accession to his possessions, and ultimately in his promotion to the title. Though the circumstances of this quarrel are by no means of historical importance, yet Cox's narration of them is for many reasons interesting; we shall therefore extract some of the very quaint and amusing speeches which this writer has put into the mouths of the contending parties.

"The lord justice," writes Cox, "hearing many complaints of the oppressions the country daily received, which he thought reflected on him, and insinuated his misadministration, therefore to disburthen and excuse himself, he began, in misty speeches, to lay the fault on the lord John Fitzgerald's shoulders, saying (in parable wise) 'that he was a great occasion of these disorders, in that he bare himself in private quarrels as fierce as a lyon, but in these public injuries as meek as a lamb.' The baron of Ophaly, spelling and putting these syllables together, spake after this manner:—

"My lord, I am heartily sorry, that among all this noble assembly you make me your only butt, whereat you shoot your bolt; and truly were my deserts so hainous, as I suppose you wish them to be, you would not cloud your talk with such dark riddles, as at this present you have done; but with plain and flat English, your lordship would not stick to impeach me of felony or treason; for as mine ancestors with spending of their blood in their sovereign's quarrel, aspired to this type of honour, in which at this day (God and my king be thanked) I stand; so your lordship, taking the nigher way to the wood, by charging me with treason, would gladly trip so roundly on my top, that by shedding of my blood, and by catching my lands into your clutches, that butt so near upon your mannors of Kildare and Rathingham, as I dare say are an eyesore unto you, you might make my master, your son, a proper gentleman!"

"A gentleman!" quoth the lord justice, 'thou bold baron, I tell thee the Vescies were gentlemen before the Geraldines were barons of Ophaly; yea, and before that Welch bankrupt, thine ancestor (he meant Sir Maurice Fitz-Gerald), feathered his nest in Leinster. And whereas thou takest the matter so far in snuff, I will teach thee thy syripups after another fashion, than to be thus malapertly cocking and billing with me, that am thy governour. Wherefore, albeit thy taunts are such as might force the patientest philosopher that is, to be choakt with choler, yet I would have thee ponder my speech, as though I delivered it in my most sober and quiet mood. I say to the face of thee, and I will avow what I say unto thee, that thou art a supporter of thieves, a bolsterer of the king's enemies, an upholder of traytors, a murderer of subjects, a firebrand of dissension, a rank thief, an

arrant traitor, and before I eat these words, I will make thee eat a piece of my blade.'

"The baron, bridling with might and main his choler, bare himself as cold in countenance as the lord justice was hot in words, and replied in this wise:—

"My Lord, I am very glad that at length you unwrap yourself out of that net wherein all this while you masked. As for mine ancestor (whom you term bankrupt), how rich or how poor he was, upon his repair to Ireland, I purpose not at this time to debate; yet thus much I may boldly say, that he came hither as a buyer, not as a beggar—he bought the enemies' land by spending his blood. But you, lurking like a spider in his cobweb to entrap flies, endeavour to beg subjects' livings wrongfully, by despoiling them of their innocent lives. And you charge me with malapertness, in that I presume to chop logic with you, being governour, by answering your snappish *quid* with a knappish *quo*. I would wish you to understand (now that you put me in mind of the distinction), that I, as a subject, honour your royal authority, but as a nobleman I despise your dunghill gentility. Lastly, whereas you charge me with the odious terms of traitor, murderer, and the like, and therewithal you wish me to resolve myself, that you rest upon reason, not upon rage; if these words proceed from your lordship as a magistrate, I am a subject to be tried by order of law, and am sorry that the governour, who ought, by vertue of his publick authority, to be my judge, is, by reason of private malice, become mine accuser.

"But if you utter these speeches as a private person, then I, John Fitzgerald, baron of Ophaly, do tell thee, William Vesceie, a single-sole gentlemen, that I am no traitor, no felon; and that thou art the only buttress by which the king's enemies are supported; the mean and instrument by which his majesties subjects are daily spoiled; therefore, I, as a loyal subject, say traitor to thy teeth; and that shalt thou well understand when we both shall be brought to the rehearsal of these matters before our betters. Howbeit, during the time you bear office, I am resolved to give you the mastery in words, and to suffer you, like a brawling cur, to bark; but when I see my time, I will be sure to bite."

After these "biting speeches" had passed, and a considerable ferment was raised on both sides, lord Ophaly came to the determination to bring the quarrel before the king, and went to England for this purpose, whither he was quickly followed by Vesey. Lodge, with more probability, represents them both as having been summoned by the king. The king now fixed a day for the hearing of their quarrel. They met before the council. Being placed on their knees before the throne, Vesey was commanded to begin. He accused his enemy of being the main author of all the troubles in Ireland; for such he observed was his conduct with the Irish, that all their actions were governed by him. He attributed the numerous depredations which were committed to his secret suggestion or command; and he charged him with disaffected and seditious meetings, and with exclaiming against the governor. He then complained of the insult-

ing and outrageous language which he offered in answer to his own peaceable and moderate rebukes for such conduct; and concluded by pledging himself in a few days to bring forward and prove charges of the utmost criminality against him.

Lord Ophaly listened with cool and scornful intrepidity to these vague charges, and when his accuser had concluded, he "prest himself somewhat forward," to reply. He ridiculed the dilatory conduct of Vesey, in having suffered such accusations to sleep for so many years, and at last having brought them forward in so crude and indefinite a form; so that while he accused him in general terms of being the main cause of all the Irish disorders, he did not specify a single act of disloyalty on his part. As for his menace of treasonable accusations at a future day, he laughed it to scorn, and compared his enemy to the philosopher of antiquity who proposed to teach an ass to speak in seven years, provided he might be allowed to live so long; knowing that within that time, the king, who had menaced his life, or himself, or the ass, would probably die. He himself, he observed, would not, like his adversary, lose his errand on the way, and having come before his majesty forget or retract any thing he had spoken in Ireland. He then accused Vesey of corruption, and of excluding himself and all the best nobility of Ireland from his presence, while "an Irish cow could at all times have access."* He significantly alleged that a cow, a horse, a hawk, a silver bell, were the real operating motives of his conduct, and the cause of all the disorders in Ireland; and that the nobility were accused, to cover his own treasonable connivance at rebellions. He appealed to the obvious reason of the case, and observed that no one could be so far imposed upon by representations so evidently opposed to the most notorious facts. That the lord justice, having the royal army and treasure at his command, and all the authorities of the country at his beck, should not be able, if he so willed, to look out "such bare breeched brats as swarm into the English pale."† He concluded this dexterous reply with a challenge, thus reported by Cox: "But so much as our mutual complaints stand upon the one his yea, and the other his nay, and that you would be taken for a champion, and I am known to be no coward, let us in God's name leave lying for varlets, berding for ruffians, facing for crackers, chatting for twatlers, scolding for callets, booking for scriveners, pleading for lawyers; and let us try with the dint of sword as becomes martial men to do, our mutual quarrels. Wherefore, to justifie that I am a true subject, and that thou Vescie art an arch-traytor to God, and to my king, here in presence of his highness, and in the hearing of this honourable assembly, I challenge the combat.' Whereat all the auditory shouted."

The challenge was accepted, the day fixed, and much preparation made for an occasion so much in accordance with the taste and spirit of the time. But the expectation of the court was disappointed: when the day came, Vesey was in France, as Cox quaintly says, "Vescie turning his great boast to small roast, began to cry creak, and secretly sailed into France."‡

* Cox.

† Ib.

‡ Holinshed, Cox.

On being apprized of his flight, king Henry bestowed his lordships of Kildare and Rathangan on his adversary, observing, that "albeit Vesey had conveyed his person into France, yet he left his lands behind him in Ireland."

Notwithstanding this event, the probability is that the accusation of Vesey was just: his attempt to trace to their source the disorders of the country, led to a more distinct notice of the oppressions and disloyalties of the barons, than was satisfactory to these powerful nobles. And it is in the highest degree probable, that if the prompt and dexterous conduct of lord Ophaly had not cut the matter short by an appeal at that time unlikely to be rejected, that the most serious charges would have been substantiated on undoubted evidence. *This supposition is confirmed by the subsequent conduct of Fitz-Gerald on his return. The whole of this narration is impugned by Leland, who gives no authority, and substitutes an account far less probable in its circumstances. According to this, the proceedings were entered into, and after being carried to some length, annulled as irregular; and that Vesey voluntarily resigned his manors, because his right, which appears to have been valid, was contested by the co-heiresses of his wife.

Fitz-Gerald, on his return, conducted himself in a manner too consistent with the accusations of Vesey. Amongst other violent proceedings by which he endeavoured to enlarge his vast possessions, he made war on De Burgo, whose person he seized and imprisoned. Continuing this war, he carried his violent proceedings to an extent that rendered all connivance impossible; he was impeached in form, and obliged to appear before the king and give security for his future peaceable conduct.

From this the tenor of his history changes; in 1296, and in 1301, we find him assisting the king in Scotland. In 1307, he also distinguished himself by his services in conjunction with his son-in-law Edmond Butler (soon after lord Carrick) against the rebels in Ophaly.

During this lord's time, the principal factions in Ireland were those of De Burgo and his own, who were engaged against each other in hostilities, only interrupted by the occasional influence of the government, or by the accident of circumstances, which from time to time occurred to divert their activity from mutual strife, to the service of the king. On these occasions, the royal service was materially promoted by their jealous anxiety to outshine each other in their force, equipments, and actions.

The last year of his life was one of violent disturbance in Ireland. It was the year of the Scottish invasion, which we must reserve for other lives to which its details more properly appertain. This lord was, however, among those who first gave a check to the invader Edward Bruce, brother to the king of Scotland, by giving him some severe defeats. In consideration of these services, as well as to secure his loyalty, king Edward II. created him earl of Kildare, by letters patent, dated 14th May, 1316.*

He died in the same year, and was interred in the Franciscan friary

* Lodge.

of Kildare. He was married to a daughter of lord Fermoy, and had four children. Of these, Thomas John succeeded him; Joan was married to Edmond Butler, lord Carrick; and Elizabeth to the ancestor of the Netherville family.

Second Feidlim O'Connor, Prince of Connaught.

DIED A. D. 1316.

THIS unfortunate prince was most probably the grandson of the prince of the same name already commemorated in this volume.* Of his personal history we know no more than the particulars which belong to the general history of the period. But these are such as to fix his claim to a separate notice.

On the invasion of Ireland by the Scots, under the command of Edward Bruce, in 1315, Feidlim joined De Burgo with his provincial force. He was about twenty-two years of age, high spirited and distinguished for his military ardour, but rash and inexperienced. He was probably impatient of the domineering influence under which he was controlled by the power and pride of the De Burgos, and was therefore the more open to the secret seductions of Bruce. To him Bruce represented the disgrace of his dependent condition; he reminded him of the ancient power and honour of his illustrious line; and promised to reinstate him in all the possessions of his family as fully as they had been possessed by the greatest monarch of his race; for this purpose he conjured him to desert his oppressors, and the enemies of his family and nation, and to join him in driving them from the island. Feidlim, easily seduced by this romantic notion, sought a pretence to detach himself from the earl of Ulster. Such a pretence was nearer than he would have wished.

Taking advantage of his absence, Roderic, a near relation, possessed himself of his territories. He, too, entered into a communication with Bruce, and promised to assist him and put the province of Connaught under his sovereignty, if he were himself fixed securely in possession of the powers and territories of the rightful prince. His offer of service was accepted; but he was at the same time warned of the danger which would follow from division, and entreated to leave Feidlim's possessions undisturbed, until the expulsion of the common enemy should leave them at liberty to discuss their respective claims. Roderic, who was perhaps aware of the hollowness of this politic counsel, and that he had no claims suited to such a discussion, gave no heed to the advice, and proceeded with vigour and success to obtain his objects. He found no difficulty in compelling or influencing the septs to give hostages for their faithful adherence to his interest; and when Feidlim had arrived to protect his own rights, he found that he was late. His march too had been interrupted and beset by the Northern septs, who looked upon him as an ally of their enemies, and when he had reached a safe position, he was no longer at the head of an

* Page 345.

army; his remaining followers were few and discouraged, and he was without the means of supporting them.

He was soon followed by De Burgo, whose force did not enable him to meet Bruce in the field. But even with this reinforcement, Feidlim was not strong enough to bring matters to the issue of force.

At this time Sir John Birmingham was appointed commander in Ireland; and considering Feidlim as the ally of the English, he immediately joined him with a body of English troops, and he was reinstated in his possessions by an engagement in which his rival was defeated and slain.

The first use this unfortunate prince made of his deliverance, was such as indeed to deserve the fatal consequences which he soon incurred. He was no sooner freed from the presence of his deliverers, than he threw off concealment, and openly declared for Bruce.

The penalty followed soon upon the crime. William de Burgo and Richard de Birmingham were detached into Connaught, to chastise his defection. He had given much assistance to Bruce, and done great mischief to the English in repeated incursions upon their settlements; in these he surprised at several times, and slew Stephen of Exeter, Miles Cogan, William Prendergast, and other brave knights.* A powerful force of English troops now hung, like a distant thunder-cloud upon the horizon, and Feidlim was in a position of emergency which might have damped the fiercest valour of his race. Feidlim's courage was in no way damped; he prepared to meet the danger with a spirit worthy of a better cause, and marched forward to give battle to the enemy. They met near Athenry, a town within eleven miles of Galway; and an engagement ensued, in which Feidlim was slain. This battle was fatal to his race, who never again recovered their importance and authority. It was also the most sanguinary that had taken place since the arrival of the English: the slain on the part of the Irish are said to have been about 8000, and there seems no reason to doubt the statement.

Edmond, Lord Carrick.

SUCCEEDED A. D. 1299.—DIED A. D. 1321.

THIS nobleman succeeded his brother Theobald, in 1299, and was thus the sixth in succession from the first of that name, whose coming to Ireland we have already detailed.† He was knighted in 1309 by Edward II., and obtained great honour in that year for his success, in concert with Thomas Fitz-Gerald, against the insurgents in Connaught and Ophaley. In 1312, he was lord deputy, and suppressed the depredation of the Byrnes and Tooles. In 1314 he was lord justice in Ireland, and rendered himself conspicuous for his prudence and activity in the preparations which were made against Bruce's invasion. It was at this time that he was created earl of Carrick-Mac-Griffine, in the county Tipperary, by patent dated at Lincoln, 1st September, 1315, with

* Book of Clonmacnoise, Leland.

† Page 343.

large grants, to which other extensive possessions in the county of Waterford were added in a few years after. In 1320, he went on a pilgrimage into Spain, to visit the shrine of St James of Compostella; and on his return, died in London, 13th September, 1321, and was interred at Gowran, in the county Kilkenny.

He was married to a daughter of the first earl of Kildare, by whom he had five children; his eldest son James succeeded him.*

Second Earl of Kildare.

SUCCEEDED A. D. 1316.—DIED A. D. 1328.

THIS nobleman was appointed as leader of an army of thirty thousand men, which was levied to meet Bruce. But his dispositions were rendered vain by the interference of lord Mortimer, who came over with a considerable force to assume the command, and sent orders for the postponement of active operations till his arrival. The delay was fatal to the occasion, as Bruce took advantage of it to avoid an engagement for which he was not in condition.

This earl was lord justice in 1320, and was again appointed in 1326. He died in this high station, in 1328, in his castle at Maynooth, and was buried in the Franciscan friary of Kildare. He married a daughter of Richard de Burgo; by her he had three sons, of whom Richard succeeded him.

Sir John Birmingham.

DIED A. D. 1329.

SIR JOHN BIRMINGHAM'S ancestors had a castle in the town of Birmingham, from which their name is derived. The English branch continued to possess the lordship of this place until the reign of Henry VIII., when, says Lodge, "Edward Birmingham, the last heir male, was wrested out of that lordship by John Dudley, afterwards duke of Northumberland." William de Birmingham, who lived in the reign of Henry II. and Richard I., is supposed to have been the common father of both branches. It is yet doubtful amongst antiquaries, whether it was his son Robert or himself, who came over with Strongbow. We shall not discuss the point: whichever it may have been, he obtained ample grants from Strongbow. From this adventure is traced with more certainty Pierce de Birmingham, the first lord of Athenry, who was a distinguished nobleman in the reign of Henry III. His grandson Peter, the third lord, was father† to the eminent person whom we are to notice here, who was the second son. He is justly entitled to a conspicuous rank among the most eminent persons of his time. His most illustrious achievement was the termination of the disastrous war consequent on Bruce's invasion, to which we

* Lodge.

† Lodge, Archdall.

have been compelled partially to advert in other lives. We may now proceed to its detail.

It will not be necessary to detail the incidents of Scottish history which led to Edward Bruce's descent on the Irish coast. The death of Edward I. freed the Scotch from the pressure of a formidable enemy. Robert Bruce, after a long struggle with adversity, was, by the issue of the battle of Bannockburn, placed in secure possession of the Scottish throne.

The Irish were also soon apprized of the feebleness of the English prince, and were seized by a strong desire to avail themselves of the opportunity to throw off the yoke. To effect such a purpose, it was, however, necessary to bring a force into the field adequate to struggle with the formidable power and valour of the English barons. Robert Bruce, who was at the time, without opposition, ravaging the northern frontiers of England, seemed an obvious resource upon such an occasion. To him, therefore, the chiefs of Northern Ulster applied. They represented the wrongs they had sustained, and were sustaining, from the inveterate enemies of his family, person, and nation; they must also have pleaded the ready assistance which he had in his own difficulties found from them; they reminded him of the near consanguinity of the two nations, and finally offered to receive a king from Scotland, should they first be liberated by his valour.

There were also reasons of a strong and peculiar nature, which operated to give ready effect to such an application. The juncture was seemingly favourable, and Robert Bruce was, by his nature, character, present situation, and tried experience, admirably adapted to succeed in such an enterprise. But other circumstances had been working, to prepare the way for the application made by the Irish, which gave a different turn to the event. The brave monarch to whom their offer was made had a brother, as enterprising and valiant as himself, to whose fiery and impetuous valour he had been indebted for success in many an arduous danger, and who had shared all his fortunes and sufferings, through the long and trying struggle which placed him on the throne. Edward Bruce was restless, violent, enterprising, and ambitious; a character which, though not unfitted to the nature of the warfare in which his youth had been passed, was scarcely compatible with the calm and peaceable subordination, which was so much the interest of his royal brother to preserve in his small and turbulent monarchy. Among the fiery, proud, and contentious elements of the Scottish aristocracy, a character like that of Edward was always to be feared. He was as rash and inconsiderate, as he was ambitious; and having so long been placed, by the emergencies of his brother's life, and the importance of his military services, in a station approaching equal command, he did not think it unreasonable to desire an equal share in the government of the kingdom. Such a proposal must have filled the breast of king Robert with disquietude, if not with alarm: however appeased by reason or concession, the wish itself was full of danger. King Robert, it is said, assured his brother of the succession, in case of the failure of issue male; but the proposal of the Irish chiefs came happily to relieve him from the difficulty, and he offered to place his brother at the head of an army, and to fix him on

the throne of Ireland. The time was favourable to this undertaking; Ireland was seemingly defenceless; the English were divided and weakened by dissension; the Irish chiefs were favourable; and England not in a condition to offer any very efficient resistance. The great monarch, whose wisdom and valour would have made such an enterprise formidable, was succeeded by a feeble prince, whose incapacity was betrayed by the uncontrolled disorder and maleadministration of every province of his kingdom, which made him the subject of universal contempt. The project was full of golden promise, and Edward Bruce was easily tempted by the glittering bait.

Some historians speak of a premature attempt of Bruce's, the result of his impatience, which, not being proportionably seconded, was repelled. It will, however, be enough here, to detail the particulars of the main effort which worked so much woe in this island, and is connected mainly with the subject of this memoir.

It was in 1314, the seventh year of king Edward II., when lord Edmund Butler was deputy in Ireland, that Edward Bruce made his appearance with three hundred transports, containing six thousand Scots, on the north-eastern coast. Having effected a landing, he took forcible possession of the castle of Man, and took the lord O'Donnell prisoner.* Soon after, he landed his entire army, and was joined by the greater part of the native chiefs of Ulster, with such forces as they could command. They freely swore fidelity to his cause, and gave their hostages. He commenced hostilities without loss of time. It was thought necessary to begin by striking terror through the country; and his operations were of the most violent and desolating character: fire, waste, and a nearly indiscriminate slaughter were diffused among the northern settlements of the English. His barbarian outrages were heightened by the savage animosity of the natives. The castles of their English neighbours were levelled to the ground; their towns destroyed by fire; and the whole settlement depopulated. The terror of the spoilers went before them, and consternation was spread through every part of the English pale. Amongst the greater English barons disunion prevailed; and it is not improbable, that they were more intent on the consideration how this invasion might be made instrumental to their private animosities or cupidities, than on the means of averting the general calamity. As has been already noticed, De Burgo rose in defence of his own possessions, which were the first to suffer from the enemy's attack; but any force that De Burgo could command, was far below the demand of the emergency. The prince of Connaught was won from his alliance by the insidious flatteries of Bruce; and he was left to the support of his own proud and courageous spirit. The lord deputy came to his aid; but unwilling to be indebted to the English government, which he had always treated with contempt, for his safety, he declared his own forces sufficient to repel the enemy. The feebleness of the government is indicated by the fact, that the lord deputy yielded to this boastful rejection, and left him to a struggle for which he was manifestly unprepared. Bruce had advanced into Louth, but was compelled, by the scarcity of provisions, to fall back

* Cox.

into Ulster. De Burgo followed, and coming to an engagement, on the 10th of September, was defeated with great loss. This defeat was, however, not sufficient to paralyze the activity of De Burgo, and he was still enabled to harass the enemy.

The operations of Bruce were materially weakened and retarded by an inconvenience which was, in some measure, the result of his own improvidence. The waste committed by his army quickly made provisions scarce, and before long grew to a disastrous dearth, to which the failure of his enterprise is mainly attributable. He found it necessary to retire into Ulster, until he might make more efficient provision, and increase his force for an advance.

During this interval, a relation of Feidlim O'Connor's took advantage of his absence to usurp his rights. Feidlim was quickly reinstated in his possessions by Sir John Birmingham, but immediately after declared for Bruce. His example was followed by many other chiefs, who had till then rested neuter. The chiefs of Munster and Meath joined their forces. The clergy declared for Bruce, and loudly called to arms. Bruce was crowned at Dundalk; and to add to this formidable conjuncture, the king of Scotland landed with a fresh and powerful force in Ireland. This sagacious prince soon saw enough to damp his ardour for the field: the subsistence of an army, even under the most favourable circumstances, was at the time a main obstacle to such enterprises; the support of the Irish was little to be counted on; the resistance of the English, though tardy, would be formidable; and a sagacious eye could perceive, that while the Scottish force was daily becoming less efficient, the hostile power was slowly gathering from afar. The first step to be gained by the English was embarrassed by many difficulties: it was hard for the lord justice to bring an army into the field; but if this were once effected, the odds would be fearfully against any force that could be brought to oppose them. It was, besides, no part of king Robert's plan to waste his life upon an enterprise made painful by distressing dearth of means, and beset with incalculable difficulties and impediments. He was satisfied with having cheered his proud and hotbrained brother to perseverance, and having effected this purpose, he retired. He left his army with his brother, who was thus enabled to assume a more formidable posture. Among his adherents were many of the degenerate English, of whom the De Lacies and their numerous followers were the chief part.*

He laid siege to Carrickfergus. This town resisted to the most distressing extremities of weakness and famine; but the vast increase of the besieging force now rendered further resistance hopeless, and it was compelled to surrender. Bruce was next obliged to march southward.

The appearance of danger was imposing; a strong and numerous army, led by a renowned warrior and joined by the Irish nation, was not without extreme infatuation to be lost sight of in petty animosities. It became at last evident that the safety of the whole was at stake; and the common danger began to infuse unanimity and loyalty among

* Leland.

the English barons. The chiefs of the powerful Geraldine branches of Kildare and Desmond united their efforts with lord Edmund Butler. The government, excited by the emergency and by the zeal of the barons, seconded their exertions. The battle of Athenry gave a favourable impulse to the hopes of these leaders, and a discouraging check to the body of the Irish chiefs who were leagued with Bruce. Bruce was not of a temper to be discouraged by the discomfiture of an Irish army. He marched to Dublin. There the citizens set fire to their suburbs; and, retiring within the walls prepared for a resolute defence. In the hurry of these operations, the cathedral of St Patrick took fire. Bruce, unwilling to lose time in so doubtful and tedious a siege, proceeded on through Naas, Castle-Dermot, and the towns on that line, burning and plundering as he went. He was guided by the Lacies, who had a little before caused themselves to be tried and acquitted of any participation in his hostile operations, and received the king's pardon. Bruce continued on unchecked in his march of devastation and plunder by Limerick, through Ossory to Cashel, and thence to Nenagh, directing his fury most chiefly against lord Edmund Butler's estates in the counties of Kilkenny and Tipperary.

There was at this time a meeting of the English barons at Kilkenny; they had, with much difficulty, collected an army, said to amount to thirty thousand men, but still scarcely to be depended on in a seriously contested engagement, as it was made up of a mixture of all classes of persons who could be collected. The operations of this force were checked by the arrival of lord Mortimer, who wished to command them in person. Bruce found his forces too much weakened for a direct encounter, and led them back to Ulster.

The English were not provided for a long pursuit through an exhausted country, and the new deputy dismissed his forces and repaired to Dublin to renew his preparations upon a more adequate scale. Here the barons were once more convened; and the earl of Ulster, who had been imprisoned by the lord mayor, was released at the instance of the lord deputy.

The next step of the governor was to reduce the Lacies in Meath, and to regulate the province of Leinster, through the disorders of which the English subjects had long been reduced to the severest extremes of suffering and depression. The famine, arising from the long continuation of a wasting internal war, had now reached its height. All provisions had risen to the most exorbitant prices, and numbers were dying from mere want. But the proceedings of the government gradually infused vigour and organization into the councils of the English, and the court of England had begun to take more active steps for their security. The pope was applied to, and the sentence of excommunication was denounced against all the enemies of king Edward of England. In this curse the Bruces were included by name; the Irish clergy were also either included or menaced, and a two years' truce was commanded between the Scots and English. To this the Irish chiefs replied, by the representation of the grievous wrongs and oppressions they had sustained from the English, which were, they said, so intolerable, that they were compelled, as a last resource, to invite the Scottish prince to protect and rescue them from

their oppressors. Their representations, which were probably not much beyond the truth, made an impression on the pope, who transmitted it to king Edward, with a strong remonstrance, advising him to redress the grievances of the Irish, that they might thus have no excuse for revolt.

Bruce gave little heed to these denunciations. His condition admitted of no long protraction of the war; his only chance was in the advantage of the present moment, and in the difficulties which his enemies found in bringing an efficient army into the field. His own army was beginning to melt away, under the severity of its wants and fatigues. The resources of the country were exhausted by the ravage of destruction and the cessation of culture. All the various horrible and disgusting resources of starvation had been tried; the last hideous resource of desperate self-preservation, even in its most revolting extreme, had been had recourse to—the living fed upon the victims of disease; a still increasing famine was widening its fatal desolation round their marches and encampments; and disease, the sure companion of famine, was ravaging through Ulster. Dissension, too, began to revive among his Irish friends: four thousand Irish fell in mutual conflict in Connaught.

The lord justice was summoned into England; in his room Alexander Ricknor, archbishop of Dublin, was made deputy; he appointed Sir John Birmingham general of the English. Bruce advanced towards Dundalk with three thousand men, the remains of a gallant army. Birmingham advanced to meet him with a small but select force of fifteen hundred English.

Both parties were eager for the decision of the field. The Scotch were weary of a protracted warfare, with famine and disease, which had grievously thinned their numbers, and were likely to exterminate them; they had probably looked for a different issue—an easy conquest, with the rich spoils of the ejected English. These had, on their part, still keener motives to excite their ardour. They must have resented the intrusion of the Scotch upon their hard won acquisition, and felt that the protracted disquietude and danger arising from the presence of so formidable a foe, must now be brought to a decided end. Each army was equally confident of victory. The tried valour of Bruce gave confidence to the Scots, who listened with military ardour to his cheering exhortations. The bishop of Armagh walked through the English ranks, represented the justice of their cause, and promised absolution to those who should fall.

The fight began, and was for some time maintained on both sides with the steady valour of those two brave nations. But the Scots, though numerous, were exhausted by their fatigues and sufferings; they were soon compelled to give way before the unbroken strength and spirit of the English. Bruce was slain, but the accounts of his death are not quite consistent. Most of our historians represent him as having been slain in the onset by Maupas, a brave English knight, who rushed forward to meet him in the ranks; but another account, more circumstantially related, places his death immediately before the battle, while the two armies were yet encamped half a mile asunder. According to this latter account, Maupas was a burgher of Dundalk:

having disguised himself in a fool's dress, he entered the Scottish camp, and seeking out Bruce, he dashed his brains out with a leaden plummet.* He was instantly cut to pieces. When Birmingham received intelligence of the event, he at once took advantage of the confusion it must have caused, and commanded an attack. Both accounts agree that Bruce was slain by Maupas, whose body was found stretched over him. This incident cannot be reconciled with the last mentioned accounts, as it seems to imply a state of confused resistance and hurried flight; for it is nearly impossible that the respect of the Scots would have suffered the body of his slayer to lie across that of their general, if there was a moment for the deliberate notice of such a circumstance. Maupas's heir was rewarded with forty marks per annum. Bruce's head was sent to king Edward by Birmingham, who was created earl of Louth, by a patent dated 12th May, 1319,† with a grant of the manor of Atherdee in that county.

The same year he gained another victory, in Connaught, over O'Connor and MacKelly, in which 500 Irish were slain. In June, 1321, he was lord justice in Ireland, with a fee or salary of 500 marks. In 1322, he conducted a large force into England, to join the king in his intended war with the Scots.‡

In 1325, he founded the Franciscan friary of Thermoy. He was at length murdered by the Irish in Louth, on Whitsun-Eve, at Ballibeagan in 1329,§ with many of his kindred and name, to the amount of 200 persons. He was the most able leader among the Irish barons of his day. He was married to a daughter of the earl of Ulster, by whom he left three daughters.||

Maurice, First Earl of Desmond.

CREATED A. D. 1329.—DIED A. D. 1356.

IN 1329, this nobleman was created earl of Desmond, at the same time that his son-in-law, Edmund Butler, was raised to the earldom of Carrick, by Edward II.; by the same patent, the county of Kerry was confirmed to him and his heirs male, to hold by the service of one knight's fee. He took an active and efficient part in the war against Bruce.

It is mentioned that some time in the year 1327, Maurice (not yet earl of Desmond) took offence at Arnold Poer for calling him a rhymmer, and declared war against him. Maurice was joined by the Butlers and Birmingham; and many of the Poers and Burkes, who sided with them, were slain or driven out of Connaught, and their lands despoiled. The Fitz-Geralds and Butlers increased their force, and committed such ravages that the country was thrown into the utmost alarm. Complaints were made to government; these were met by professions on the opposite side, of the most just and moderate intentions. They met at Kilkenny, and sought a charter of pardon;

* Lodge. † Ib. ‡ Ware's Annals. § Lodge. || Ib.

of this the lord justice took time to consider, but died before he made up his mind.

It was after this that the promotion of Maurice to the earldom took place. He was become the most powerful subject in Ireland; his services were many, but not distinguished enough for special notice here. The unhappy state of the country was such as to render the wars of chiefs, and the devastation of septs and districts, a thing too frequent for description; we can only select such instances as illustrate the period.

He was summoned by Sir John Darcie, the lord justice in 1330, to take the field against the Irish insurgents, with a promise of the king's pay. He gained a victory over the O'Nolans and O'Murroughs, ravaged their country, and compelled them to give hostages. It was on this occasion that he first introduced that grievous abuse known by the name of coigne and livery, afterwards so productive of oppression and complaint. An arbitrary exaction for the maintenance of soldiers would, at any time, or however limited by strict discretion and rule, be felt as a grievance; but in those days of licentious and unprincipled spoliation, the evil must have been increased by that reckless and grasping spirit of extortion and violence, to which life and the rights of property were trifles. This oppressive resource was quickly adopted by all the barons, and contributed more to repress the prosperity of the English settlers, on whom its burthen fell, than all the dangers and disasters they experienced from the hostility of the Irish. It originated in the penurious policy of the English court; the drain of an incessant war was sustained by no adequate supply from England, and the remedy was but too obvious, and too much a matter of necessity. The soldiers were now supported by quartering them upon the inhabitants of the district they were sent to protect: under the pretence of this necessity, the passions, cupidity, and reckless licence of a rude soldiery, abandoned to its own discretion, soon made the remedy more formidable than the evil: the English settler was quickly made to feel the insecurity of a condition so far worse than defenceless, as the false protector, armed with the licence of power, was more surely fatal than the known enemy. In their despair, numbers fled over to the Irish, whose ranks they strengthened, and with whom they soon became assimilated in language and manners. From this fatal date, the decline of the English interest was progressive for two centuries. The English were no longer a compact body, united by common interest and the sense of mutual dependence and protection; the little security to be found was in the protection of the enemy.

From the energy at first derived from this dangerous resource, Desmond acquired a vigour and efficiency in the field, not to be sustained by more regular and just means, and gained several victories on a larger scale than was commonly known in these petty wars.

A still more unwise measure of the English court, which had a very material influence on the fortunes of Desmond, demands our particular attention, as the commencement of those hapless discontents, which, perhaps, above all other causes, contributed to the decay of the English settlement.

Edward III., engrossed with projects of aggrandizement, and look-

ing to the utmost resources of men and money that his dominions could supply for the prosecution of his military enterprises, while he had little time or thought for the troubled state of Irish politics, was irritated both at the disorders and the unproductive state of that country; and not considering how mainly these were the consequences of his own neglect, came to an angry and precipitate resolution to proceed by violent and extreme steps to the termination of its disorders, instead of the just and obvious policy of supporting, and at the same time controlling his Irish barons. In place also of protecting, and bringing into subjection, the native chiefs—and thus, by a well tempered union of conciliation with irresistible force, gradually bringing the whole together into one with the rest of his dominions—he abruptly adopted a system, at the same time harsh and oppressive, while it was inefficient and not to be put into practice without such efforts as would be sufficient to carry sounder measures into effect.

This precipitate policy was hastened by events which must be admitted to have placed in a strong point of view the degeneracy of the settlers; and on a superficial consideration, appeared to call for the remedial means chiefly adopted. On the murder of the earl of Ulster, which occurred in 1338, a confused and angry movement took place among the Irish baronage; some espousing the cause of order and justice, while the turbulent and degenerate habits of others were thus brought to light. Many of the great settlers were become virtually Irish chiefs, and in a state of tacit hostility to the laws and interests of the English settlement. But the greater barons acted with due regard to justice: Desmond seized and imprisoned Fitz-Maurice, the lord of Kerry, who sided with the Irish of Munster and Kildare, and exerted himself with equal vigour and effect for the preservation of the king's authority in Leinster.

Edward angrily imputed these disorders to his Irish government and barons, and adopted a course of which the injustice and folly cannot be too strongly branded by the historian. He declared all suspensions of debts due to the crown* to be null, and ordered them to be strictly levied without delay. Many of the greater officers he dismissed; of some he seized the estates; but these and other measures of severity, some of which might be regarded as useful reforms, were trifles compared with the crowning absurdity and injustice of one ordinance, which we here insert verbatim.

"The king to his trusty and beloved John Darcy, justiciary of Ireland, greeting:

"Whereas it appeareth to us and our council, for many reasons, that our service shall the better and more profitably be conducted in the said land by English officers having revenues and possessions in England, than by Irish Englishmen married and estated in Ireland, and without any possessions in our realm of England; we enjoin you, that you diligently inform yourself of all our officers greater or lesser within our land of Ireland aforesaid; and that all such officers benefited, married and estated in the said land, and having nothing in England, be removed from their offices; that you place and substitute

* Unless those under the great seal.

in their room other fit Englishmen, having lands, tenements, and benefices in England; and that you cause the said offices for the future to be executed by such Englishmen, and none other, any order of ours to you made in contrariwise notwithstanding."*

Such was the first instance of a course of blind and irrespective policy of which Ireland has too often been the subject—a cruel, unjust, and short-sighted half-measure, which contemplated the pacification of a half barbarian country by trampling upon the interests and feelings, by damping the loyalty and paralyzing the powers of that class in which the better part of the wisdom, virtue, civilization, and civil order of a people must ever reside; and without whose assent and co-operation no government can have permanence, unless by the most iron despotism of force. To have carried this grievous injustice into effect, it would be necessary to suppress altogether the native and English aristocracy, and crush the nation down into the prostrate level of military law; for a government, proceeding on the systematic contempt of a proud and wealthy aristocracy, cannot, even in these more orderly times, subsist in peace. There was then no *populace* to be worked on by the varied artifices of modern policy, so as to create a spurious and frail support, which, though dangerous to society and fatal to the power that leans on it, can yet be made, in our times, available for the maintenance of power,—this perilous element did not then exist. To set aside the aristocracy of a nation was a gross oversight, and this soon was made to appear: it had immediate and permanent consequences.

The first consequence was the most violent aggravation of the evil, by rousing the injured barons to resistance. The next and saddest was a spirit of national animosity and jealousy between two permanent factions thus called into existence—the old settlers and the English by birth.

The powerful Irish barons were at once placed in opposition to the crown; it was no struggle for power or possession, but for the honour and the rights of their order, in which slackness would be a disgrace and crime. Desmond took the lead; the barons of the Geraldine race seconded him with zeal and energy. Sir John Morris, an English knight, without any pretension either from fortune or ability, was appointed governor; and the irritation to the pride of these great chiefs, thus insulted, was productive of immediate consequences. Desmond at once made the circuit of his adherents and connexions, conferred with the nobility, and roused the zeal and excited the fears of the towns; so that when the parliament was expected to assemble in Dublin, the lord justice heard with alarm of a convention of the prelates, nobles, and commons of the land, assembled at Kilkenny.

It is observed by Leland that the English annalists give a scanty and insufficient account of this assembly—of which Cox and Campion give three short sentences, purporting remonstrance against the inefficiency and corruption of the English governors; but Leland, whose success and diligence in searching out the original documentary evidence of Irish history, places him among the chief of our historians,

* Quoted by Leland.

cites a document found among the close rolls of the 16th year of Edward III., which he considers as the undoubted act of this assembly. Of this petition we give Leland's abstract, which indeed leaves no doubt as to its occasion and source:—

“The petitioners begin with representing the total neglect of fortifications and castles, particularly those of the late earl of Ulster, in Ulster and Connaught, now in the king's custody, but abandoned by his officers, so that more than a third part of the lands conquered by his royal progenitors were regained by the Irish enemy; and by their insolence on the one hand, and the excesses of his servants on the other, his faithful subjects are reduced to the utmost distress. Other castles, they observe, had been lost by the corruption of treasurers, who withheld their just pay from the governors and warders; sometimes, obliged them in their necessities to accept some small part of their arrears, and to give acquittance for the whole; sometimes substituted in their place mean and insufficient persons, contented with any wages they were pleased to allow; sometime appointed governors to castles never erected, charging their full pay and disbursing but a trifling part; that the subject was oppressed by the exaction of victuals never paid for, and charged at their full value to the crown, as if duly purchased; that hostings were frequently summoned by the chief governor without concurrence of the nobles, and money accepted in lieu of personal service; treaties made with the Irish, which left them in possession of those lands which they had unjustly seized; the attempts of the subjects to regain them punished with fine and imprisonment; partial truces made with the enemy, which, while one country was secured, left them at liberty to infest the neighbouring districts; the absence and foreign residence of those who should defend their own lands and seigniories, and contribute to the public aid and service; illegal seizures of the persons and properties of the English subjects;—all these, with various instances of corruption, oppression, and extortion, in the king's servants, were urged plainly and forcibly, as the just grounds of discontent.

“But chiefly, and with particular warmth and earnestness, they represent to the king that his English subjects of Ireland had been traduced and misrepresented to the throne, by those who had been sent from England to govern them—men who came into the kingdom without knowledge of its state, circumstances, or interests; whose sole object was to repair their shattered fortunes; too poor to support their state, much less to indulge their passions, until they had filled their coffers by extortion, to the great detriment and affliction of the people; that notwithstanding such misrepresentations, the English subjects of Ireland had ever adhered in loyalty and allegiance to the crown of England, had maintained the land for the king and his progenitors, served frequently both against the Irish and their foreign enemies, and mostly at their own charges.”

From the same author we learn that the answer of Edward was gracious; he consented that the grants should be restored, and the pardons of debts valid, until these causes should be duly investigated. He was preparing for his expedition into France—a circumstance which must have much influenced his answer; and he applied for their assistance, by leading their forces to join his army.

But the spirit he had raised was not to be so put down; his conciliatory reply was not adequately followed up by measures adapted to allay the pride and jealousy he had raised. It was a little thing to tell the proud Irish baron that he was not to be robbed under the sanction of royal authority, when the selection of governors was still such as too faithfully to reflect the most insulting features of the offensive ordinance.

The measures of Edward were, however, judiciously carried into effect; and the first consequences must be described as beneficial. Ufford, an Englishman of vigour and talent, was sent over, and enforced the laws of civil order with a high and equal hand. The system of policy was one which demanded more than ordinary vigour to enforce, and Ufford went to work with prompt and decisive energy. He ordered the marchers to their stations; forbade private wars, or coalitions with the enemies of the pale. He summoned Desmond to Dublin to attend parliament; but Desmond despised the call, and summoned a parliament of his own. Ufford forbade the attendance of the Irish nobles and commons; and, collecting his forces, marched at once into Munster, and seized on the territories of Desmond, whom he thus compelled to a reluctant submission: with equal alertness he attacked, seized, and imprisoned Kildare. Desmond was released on the bail of the earls of Ormonde and Ulster, and twenty-four knights; but the uncompromising severity of Ufford disheartened him, and he did not appear.

The brave Ufford died on the 9th April, 1346;* Sir John Morris was again appointed, and acted with more lenity; but an insurrection broke out in Ulster, and the king sent over first Darcy, and then Walter de Birmingham. Desmond now took courage to re-appear upon the scene. He was received with friendly warmth by Birmingham, who sent him to England to plead his own grievances and justifications to the royal ear. The occasion was fortunate; Edward thought of this and all things as they might affect his own projects, as he was preparing to embark for France. Desmond was retained in his service, and attended him with a considerable train into France, receiving promises of the most prompt redress and restoration. He was present at the siege of Calais; and the favour of the king produced for some time a most beneficial effect on the discontented baronage of Ireland.

During this time, Desmond received one pound per day for his expenses, his own estates being under forfeiture. In 1352, they were restored, with those of other barons who had been dispossessed by Ufford; and Ireland continued so quiet for some years, that there is no special record of any interest, until the administration of Sir Thomas Rokeby, whose strict honour and integrity are celebrated by all historians; but he did not understand the feelings and complicated interests of the country he was sent to govern: and troubles which again broke out in Ulster, made it necessary to make a more effectual appointment. Desmond was now in favour, and appeared, from his power, connexion, and warlike temper, to be the best suited to meet the

* Cox.

emergency of the occasion. To him the government was committed. But, unfortunately for the country, he did not live to fulfil the expectations raised by the firm and vigorous commencement of his administration. He died in the beginning of the year 1356, and left the reputation of being "so just a man, that he spared not his own relations when they were criminal."* No small eulogium in such a time.

Desmond died in the castle of Dublin, and was interred in the church of the friars' preachery of Tralee.†

He was thrice married; by his third wife, daughter to the lord of Kerry, he left a successor, Gerald, the fourth earl of Desmond.‡

Sir Robert Savage.

FLOURISHED A. D. 1353.

It is perhaps the peculiar character of this period of our biography, that while it has more than the ordinary proportion of names, rendered eminent by rapid rise, great actions, and weighty importance in their generation, there is comparatively little or no personal record of the illustrious persons who bore them;—*stat nominis umbra*, might be taken for their common motto. To have a history, even in the most vague and general acceptation of the term, it was necessary not only to be famous in their day, but to be so identified with the whole of the tissue of our national history, that the events of the age may be stated as the life of the individual. Hence it is that, while numerous names are rendered eminent by the circumstances of a long descent, and wide-branching families which can trace their fortunes to the valour and wisdom of ancestors who lived in this period, we are yet obliged to confine our notices to a small selection of names mostly within a few great families. The history of Ireland for many centuries, is, in fact, little more than a history of the Geraldines and Butlers, of the De Burgos, Birminghams, and other illustrious settlers. But of the great Irish chiefs so renowned in their day—the O'Nials, M'Carthys, O'Briens, O'Donnells, and O'Conors—it has been with some difficulty that we have been enabled to connect some scattered notices to diversify our pages. Lives constructed regularly according to the rigid notion of biography, strictly personal in their main details, have been quite impossible even in those cases in which the materials are the most favourable. These reflections may be received as a preface not inappropriate to the following scanty notice of Sir Robert Savage. The incident it contains is highly characteristic of the age in which it occurred, and will afford the reader one of those occasional gleams of the moral and civil state of that period, which should not be lost.

"About this time," writes Cox, "lived Sir Robert Savage, a very considerable gentleman in Ulster, who began to fortify his dwelling with strong walls and bulwarks; but his son derided the father's providence and caution, affirming that a castle of bones was better than a castle of stones, and thereupon the old gentleman put a stop to his

* Cox.

† Lodge.

‡ Ibid.

building." Some of the neighbouring Irish had made a plundering excursion into the territories of this stout old knight of Ulster; he promptly assembled his own people, and collected assistance from his neighbours, with the intent of chastising the affront, and perhaps repairing the losses he must have sustained. But with a cool deliberation worthy of the warrior who deemed that his valour needed no bulwarks, he thought it would be paying too serious a compliment to an enemy he despised, to go without his supper on their account, and gave orders to have a plentiful supper prepared for himself and his companions at their return from the fatigues of the day. One of the company, not without reason, surprised at this premature provision for a moment of which his fears suggested the extreme uncertainty, observed that it was not unlikely that his hospitable forethought might turn out to be for the advantage of the enemy. Sir Robert replied in the true spirit of Hibernian wit, bravery, and hospitality, that he had better hopes from their courage; but that he should feel ashamed if his enemies even were to find his house inhospitable and devoid of cheer. His valour was crowned on this occasion with a complete and decisive victory, sufficient even to fulfil his son's architectural project; as by the historian's account his party slew three thousand of the Irish near Antrim, and "returned joyfully to supper."

The story is probable enough, though the numbers of the slain are likely to be exaggerated; for unless some unusual accident operated in his favour, this particular either implies a larger force than a person of less than the highest authority could well have commanded; or the revolting supposition that Sir Robert and his friends exercised their valour upon a defenceless crowd, whom it should have been sufficient to repulse with the loss of a few prominent ringleaders. It is pretty evident, that such slaughters rarely took place in the many encounters we have had from time to time to notice; yet in these the chief leaders of the English were engaged with large bodies of the Irish, whose skill in retreat was hardly less than the skill and discipline of the English in the attack. It must be observed, that such a result should have found a more distinguished place in the history of the time.

Of more importance is the view which such incidents afford of the dreadful state of the country, where a slaughter, considerable enough to warrant such an exaggeration (if such it be), can be mentioned as a cursory incident, insufficient to call for any detail. The true horror of a state in which there seems to have been an unrestrained licence of private war on every scale, according to the means or objects of the individual, is not easily placed in the deep shade of enormity and terror which its real character demands. It was a fearful field for the exercise of all the worst and most terrific excesses of human vice and passion, and must have led to all the disorders incidental to a disorganized state of society. The power to encroach and usurp, to trample and to tyrannize, will seldom remain long unused, or be wanting in full and sufficient excuse for the perpetration of enormities without bound, but that which must limit all human exertions. Unfortunately for the more numerous and less civilized classes who are the eventual sufferers from such collisions, they have too easily, even in more civilized eras,

been led to provoke inflictions which have the plea of justice and the fury of resentment. The warrior who considered bones as a safer bulwark than stones, could not in this disordered state of things long remain without a trial of his maxim, likely to be fatal to himself or his assailants. We do not hazard these reflections for the purpose of a ridiculous censure on deeds so wholly unlike the events of modern times. It is easy, were it to any purpose, to find excuses—in man's nature, the manners of the time, and the existing circumstances—both for the aggressions of the Irish and the sanguinary retaliations of the English. It is their excuse that they were ungoverned by law, the sole preserver of civil order. The crime was that of an age in which invasion and robbery in every form and upon every scale, seems to have been sanctioned by opinion, and scarcely condemned by law. The Irish septs, if they could not justly complain, might fairly retaliate; the history of the time is composed of such sanguinary retaliations: in these, it would be hard to trace the wrong to its source; the process does not belong to justice. When on the other hand, the settlers were not protected in their rights, they can scarcely be blamed if they protected themselves by violence which could not fail to be stimulated by fear, anger, party animosity, and all the bitter and inflaming instincts, which soon add force to human strife from whatever cause. Power is a fatal trust to human breasts, whether lodged with the many, with the few, or with one; and hence the high perfection of that state in which the power resides in the law alone. Such a state in its perfection is of course ideal; but it is the consummation of the true principles of civil government, and only ideal because perfection does not belong to human things. Ireland appears to have presented a frightful exemplification of every social evil which can befall a nation; they told upon her with awful effect, and have left traces never yet effaced by the firm, equal, and resistless force of constitutional civil control.

Had the English been supported, fully established, and at the same time controlled, by the monarchs who even in the pale possessed little more than a nominal power, all would have proceeded with a demonstrably progressive course, hand in hand with the English monarchy, toward the same high perfection of civil order. Instead of the English settlers having sunk into the barbarism which ages of disorganization had caused in this island, the Irish chiefs would have rapidly risen to the level of the English civilization of the period, and the country would have become what unfortunately it is not yet—a province of Great Britain, having not only the same laws, but what is as essential to its civilization and prosperity, the same religion, manners, and national feelings. Leland, indeed, has ventured an affirmation which he has not succeeded in maintaining, and been followed as rashly by others, to whom it seems not to have occurred in writing Irish history, to look into the contemporary history of England, before they ventured comparative assertions. Leland dwells with a strong pencil on the disorders of the social frame of England, in the reign of Edward III., and having described the slavery of the mass, the power and tyranny of the barons, the oppressions and exactions of the monarch, he somewhat loosely ob-

serves, that "the whole picture both of the English and the native inhabitants of Ireland, is exactly delineated." Looking only at the broad features of this delineation, no very decided objection lies against the comparison; but its merit is certainly not exactness. The disorders already described in this and every preceding period of Irish history, find no exact parallel for frequency, duration, magnitude, or actual character, until we look back to the Saxon heptarchy, when petty robbers, under the name of kings and chiefs, contended with the sea pirates of the north, in inflicting all conceivable oppressions on a savage population. The crimes and contentions of the Irish chiefs of either race (we include the Norman with the Irish and Danish) which form the substance of our narrations, may, it is true, be paralleled for violence, for flagitiousness, and for their more immediate consequences, with those which darken the page of Anglo-Norman history. When the great oppress the feeble, when armed provinces or fellow-citizens meet in the field, or scatter waste and devastation through provinces, the sufferings and evils are nearly the same, whatever may be the spirit and occasion. But it is widely different when the after consequences are to be deduced. Then, the institutions and the mind of a nation is to be looked into with minute and critical scrutiny, and the political frame of the country must be examined, not merely with regard to its grosser effects, but with respect to its direction and tendencies. The political springs of the English disorders were different, the social frame on and from which they operated wholly so, the spirit of the people different, that of the barons different, that of the monarchy a distinct and peculiar principle. The state of manners, knowledge, and the arts of life too, was widely dissimilar, and exercising an hourly influence on the whole system, not to be appreciated distinctly without much close study. We must, to avoid lengthened dissertation here, take a shorter course. The following main differences lie on the surface.

In Ireland, all the contests were those of *individuals* contending for their *several purposes*—to acquire territory—to revenge insult or wrong—to rob, murder, or protect and defend. The chief and the baron were to all intents so many bandit leaders, each looking to preserve his own domain of spoliation inviolate. There was no general constitution contemplated, no abstract element recognised, no *principle* contended for. The chiefs did not unite to repel the Norman barons, the Norman barons did not (with some exceptions in extreme cases) combine to maintain or to control the usurpations of a higher power. We find no proud vindication of the laws of the realm, expressing the sense of an assembled estate, no field of Runnymede, or spirited and virtuous remonstrance, *nolumus leges Angliæ mutari*, to show that, although the English barons tyrannized in their several spheres (as *men* will ever when they can), yet there was a *corporate* sense, a public feeling, and a common cause; that, in a word, *principles* were at work. At that age, the *people*, in the present sense of the word, had scarcely existence in either country. But already in England, this third element of society was infused into the spirit of the mass, and corporate interests began to form, and become the centres of a growing constitutional force. If there was oppression, it was

the result, not of *mere licentious disorganization*, but of a *system*, the best that could have existed at the time; and there is a wide difference between a vicious order of things, and the total absence of any order. The people were slaves, and were fit to be slaves; but there were processes at work which were to raise their condition both morally and politically by co-ordinate steps. A systematic contest between the monarch and his barons for power, had the necessary effect of raising a third, and after them a fourth class into importance. The growth of wealth, the development of finance, as well as the struggles between the throne and aristocracy, were permanent principles essentially pervading the entire working of the British nation from the beginning of the monarchy perhaps, certainly of the Norman race of monarchs. These worked uniformly and progressively, and produced permanent and diffusive effects. They were aided by every occasional cause. The wars of the contested succession between the families of York and Lancaster, and the contentions between the kings and the Roman see, can easily be shown to have operated in accelerating the main tendencies of the nation, toward the political balance so peculiarly the character of its laws and institutions.

The disorders of society must in every state be marked with similar characters, the same low instincts, passions, appetites, and agents are being brought into leading action in all. When it comes to blows, the moral and intellectual capacities of man are quickly thrown aside; when crowds are put in motion, the most perfect military discipline is insufficient to suppress the temper that leads to the utmost atrocity. It is needless to refine on this fact of human nature. But it does not require any subtilty of refinement to perceive the wide difference between the worst results of military oppression, and the movements of perfect anarchy, of violence ungoverned by any principle, and having no object but those very oppressions which were the accidents of British civil wars.

Richard de Burgo, Earl of Ulster.

A. D. 1326.

RICHARD, the second earl of Ulster (called, from his complexion, the red earl*), was educated in the court of Henry III. He was the most powerful subject in Ireland. In 1273, he pursued the Scots into Scotland, and in return for a most destructive incursion in which they effected great devastation in this island, he killed many men and spoiled many places. For this exploit he was made general of the Irish forces in Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and Gascoigne.† He made many wars in Ireland, raising and depressing at his pleasure the native chiefs of Connaught and Ulster. He gradually attained to such an eminence, that his name was mentioned in all commissions and parliamentary rolls before that of the lord lieutenant. He attended on the king in all his expeditions into Scotland.

* Lodge.

† Ib.

His foundations of monasteries and castles are numerous and widely scattered. He founded a Carmelite monastery at Loughreagh, and also built the castles of Ballymote and Corran, in Sligo, with a castle in the town of Sligo; castle Connel on the Shannon near Limerick; and Green castle in Down, near Carlingford bay. He closed a long and active public life, by giving a magnificent entertainment to the nobility assembled at a parliament held in Kilkenny; after which he retired to the monastery of Athasil, the foundation and burial place of his family. There he died in the same year, 1326.

Arnold de la Poer.

CIRC. A. D. 1327.

AMONGST the most distinguished warriors who came with earl Strongbow to this island, none was more eminently distinguished for personal valour and the lustre of his exploits in the field, than Sir Roger le Poer, great-grandfather to lord Arnold. He had the government of the country about Leighlin, where he was assassinated. He left a son by a niece of Sir Armoric de St Lawrence, who was the grandfather of the subject of our present memoir. All the intermediate ancestors, from the first, were brilliantly distinguished in their several generations by those actions which, however illustrious, are unhappily the too uniform burthen of the page of our history. Lord Arnold's life presents an honourable variety of less conspicuous but more intrinsically noble distinction; he is here selected for commemoration on account of the creditable part he bore in resisting the power of a superstitious and persecuting church, and the honour of having been a martyr to the cause of mercy and justice. We shall therefore briefly notice the previous events of his life, in which he had his full share in those transactions of which we have already had, and still have to detail so much, and hasten to the last melancholy tribute which is justly due to his memory.

The first remarkable event of his life was a single combat, in which he was, in his own defence, compelled to slay Sir John Bonneville, who was the assailant, as was proved at his trial before a parliament held in Kildare, in 1310, the year after the circumstance.

In 1325, he was made seneschal of the county and city of Kilkenny, an office of high trust and dignity in those days, though since degraded both in rank and functions, and in our own times existing as the foulest blemish on the distribution of justice in this country.

In 1327, he excited a tumultuary war in Ireland, by calling Gerald, earl of Desmond, a rhymer. Of this we have already taken notice in the memoir of that eminent person.

Among the gloomy characters which have appropriated to these periods in which we are now engaged, the name of "dark ages"—the most awful both on account of its causes and consequences, was the cruel and arbitrary system of church despotism maintained by persecution. At a period when the original institutions of Christianity lay buried under a spurious superstition, developed out of all those very cor-

ruptions of human nature, for which the gospel was designed to contain the remedy—the church, for the maintenance of its usurpations, had begun to protect its own groundless dogmas and spurious sanctity with an hundred-fold strictness. The primitive church was content to expel from its communion the idolater and the obstinate impugner of its fundamental doctrine: but the church of the darker ages, setting at nought this fundamental doctrine, yet assuming a character of more rigid and authoritative control of the conscience, guarded its own heresies with the rack and faggot of the inquisition. Opinion, reason, research, were hunted down with the cry of heresy and the bloodhounds of the hell-born inquisition; and a fearful tyranny, reared in moral and intellectual darkness and pillared by cruelty, was rapidly extending itself over all the kingdoms of Europe. Candour must admit that of the popes, the majority would have restrained this horrid system within the limits which their own policy required; but the vindictive principle in human nature, when it becomes combined with either superstition or any other passion of a permanent nature, and capable of affecting the multitude, readily kindles into fanaticism. And an instrument of power will seldom fail to be abused for the purposes of individual resentment or ambition.

In Ireland, where the authority of the Roman see had received slow admission, and was not for a long time after this established, the prudence of the Roman cabinet would have refrained; but the rancour of the *odium theologicum*—a term which has survived its correct meaning—burned the more fiercely in the breasts of individuals. A bishop of Ossory, fired no doubt by the report of the portentous novelty of the continental institution of the *auto da fe*, seems to have conceived the liberal and patriotic project of introducing it into Ireland.

In the midst of its distractions, and amid the wild and sanguinary confusion of a state closely bordering on utter anarchy, the island was suddenly horror-struck with the cry of heresy. Alice Ketler, a lady of rank, was the first victim of a charge, which, notwithstanding some circumstances that seem to refer it to the bigotry of an individual, it is yet not easy to avoid regarding as part of a systematic contrivance. The peculiar accusation was at least well adapted to the purpose of conciliating the sense of the multitude, ever easily brought round to any height of error or crime. A persecution for mere opinion is only popular when fanaticism has been fully kindled; but one for witchcraft, the horror of vulgar superstition, would be likely to win the support of opinion and public sentiment, and pave the way for the whole flagrant legion of St Dominic. Accordingly, this unhappy lady was accused in the spiritual court of Ossory, of the formidable crime of witchcraft; she was alleged to have stamped the sacramental wafer with the devil's name, and to have possessed an ointment to convert her staff into the flying broomstick of a witch. On this charge, one of her people was executed and her son imprisoned. The charge failed, but the accuser was resolved not to miss his object. The charge of heresy, which doubtless had been kept back to be an insidious aggravation, was brought forward, and Mrs Ketler was, on this charge, tried and condemned to the stake.

It was then that the lord Arnold de la Poer, being, as we have

mentioned, the seneschal of Kilkenny, humanely interfered. The resource of bishop Ledred was prompt and terrible;—lord Arnold was himself assailed with the fatal charge. He appealed to the prior of Kilmainham, who was chief justice; the same accusation was extended to the prior. Lord Arnold, thus deprived of every resource, was left in prison in the castle of Dublin, where his death took place before he could be brought to trial.* The prior of Kilmainham, Roger Outlaw, proved the falsehood of the accusation; but it is said that lord Arnold, having died "unassoiled," was left for a long time unburied.

As we shall not return to this disagreeable incident, we may here complete the account by adding that the archbishop of Dublin wisely and humanely determined to arrest in its commencement, the introduction of this new and fearful shape of calamity into Ireland. He assailed the fanatic of Ossory with his own weapon, and charged him with heresy. Ledred was obliged to fly, and made an impotent appeal to the Roman see.

Mortough O'Brian.

A. D. 1333.

MORTOUGH O'BRIAN, in common with every person of the name who finds a place in our pages, was descended from the hero of Clontarf, and was inaugurated king of Thomond in 1311. After undergoing many perilous vicissitudes in the party wars of his own family, he was obliged to fly, in 1314, from Thomond. He found a refuge in Connaught with the Burkes and Kellys, by whom he was humanely received and hospitably entertained. After undergoing some further troubles and reverses, he at last succeeded, in 1315, in fixing himself in the secure possession of his provincial territories. In 1316, he was chosen by the English of Munster to lead them against Bruce, and at their head he obtained some partial victories, which won him honour, and contributed both to protect Munster and weaken the Scotch. He enjoyed his sovereignty in peace till 1333, the year of his death.

Edmund de Burgo.

A. D. 1336.

EDMUND DE BURGO, the fourth son to Richard the second earl of Ulster, was made *custos rotulorum pacis*, in the province of Connaught. He is however only mentioned here on account of the horrible manner of his assassination by a relative of his own, Edward Bourk Mac-William, who contrived to fasten a stone to his neck, and drown him in the pool of Lough Measgh—a deed which occasioned frightful confusion, and nearly led to the destruction of the English in Connaught.

* Lodge.

From this unfortunate nobleman descended two noble families whose titles are now extinct, the lords of Castle Connel and Brittas.*

William de Burgo, Earl of Ulster.

A. D. 1333.

THIS nobleman was married to Maud, third daughter of Henry Plantagenet, earl of Lancaster, and by her had a daughter who was married to Lionel, duke of Clarence, third son of king Edward III., who was in her right created earl of Ulster and lord of Connaught. By her he became possessed of the honour of Clare in Thomond, from which came the title of duke Clarence, which has since been retained in the royal families of England. Lodge, from whom chiefly we have taken these particulars, mentions in addition, that the title Clarencieux, of the king of arms for the south of England, is similarly derived; for when the dukedom of Clarence escheated to Edward IV., on the murder of his brother George duke of Clarence, he made the duke's herald a king at arms, under the title of Clarencieux. The early death of this unfortunate nobleman, might seem to exempt the biographer from the task of noticing a life, which could be little connected with the political history of the period; but the circumstances of his death, in themselves marked by the worst shades of daring licence and treachery, appear to give a frightful testimony to the consequences of misgovernment.

Leland mentions, on the authority of Rymer, that "the only measure now taken for the regulation of Ireland, was that precarious and inglorious one of treating with the adversaries of government." Leland might with truth have used stronger language. This resource was to Ireland, as it has ever been wherever it has been resorted to, the fatal cause and beginning of disaster and decay: a compromise which must in every case expose either the feebleness and fear, the incapacity or the corruption of the administration, could have no consequence but the promotion of those disorders which it was intended to correct. They who seek even the most justifiable object by the commission of crime—and this is the most favourable case—will not be tied to order by any consideration of pledges. But the then government of Ireland had to deal with a degenerate race, far gone in the decline of an imperfect civilization, and self-justified in the most perfidious deeds of outrage, by a combination of grievances partly real and partly fictitious. The history of every transaction which had occurred during the five generations which had elapsed since Henry II. had tended to prove, that there was among the Irish of those generations, an assumption that no pledge was binding, no deception dishonourable in their dealings with the Norman race. It was obvious that no bargain could bribe the assassin and the robber from their spoil, if the booty offered a reward beyond the bribe. The marauder would naturally look to secure both, or calculate at least the gain between them. Actuated by no principle

* Lodge.

but the desire of acquisition or the thirst for revenge, the powerful native chief readily assumed the specious tone of good faith and honour, and frankly pledged his forbearance or protection, until he received the reward; it then became the consideration, and the only one he cared to entertain, what course his interest might prescribe. The reward was to be viewed but as an instalment of concessions to be extorted by future crimes; the pledge, the treaty, the oath, were given to the winds that have ever blown away such oaths. Of this fatal policy we shall have again to speak; its present consequence was general disorder and licence.

The earl of Ulster was murdered by his own servants, in June, 1333, in the twenty-first year of his age, at a place called the Fords, on his way into Carrickfergus. This atrocity is supposed to have been caused by the vindictive animosity of a female of his own family, Gyle de Burgo, whose brother he had imprisoned. She was married to Walter de Mandiville, who gave the first wound, and attacked him at the head of a large body of people. His death caused a great commotion among the people of Ulster, who rose in large bodies in pursuit of his murderers, and killed three hundred of them in one day. His wife fled with her infant daughter to England, and very vigorous steps were taken to bring every one to justice who was accessory to the murder. In all public pardons, granted at the time by government, a clause was added, "excepting the death of William, late earl of Ulster."*

Some of the results of the earl's death have a curious interest, and some a painful one: the decline of the De Burgo family was a consequence, and with it that of the English settlers on the Ulster estates. The feebleness of the administration operated to prevent the legal occupation of the territories of the murdered earl, by the king as guardian to his infant daughter; they became, therefore, the object of contention between the members of the family and the descendants of the house of O'Neill, their ancient possessor. The consequence was a bloody and destructive war, fatal to the English settlers; who were, notwithstanding much detached resistance, and many a gallant stand, cut up in detail by numbers and treachery, until few of them were left. In Connaught, two of the most powerful of the De Burgo family seized and divided the vast estates of their unfortunate kinsman; and in the means by which they maintained this wrong, have left another testimony of the licentious anarchy of the time, and of its main causes and character. An usurpation against the law of England was maintained by its renunciation. With it they renounced their names, language, dress, manners, and every principle of right acknowledged in their previous life; and instead, adopted the costume and character of Irishmen, and assumed the name of MacWilliam, Oughter, and Eighter. They were followed in this unfortunate and derogatory step by their dependents, and thus spread among the Connaught settlers, a deterioration of character and manners, from which they did not soon recover.

A policy of compromise has the fatal effect of rendering the whole administration one of false position and impolitic expedient. It must

* Lodge.

revolve between helpless concession and rash violence. And such was the Irish government of Edward, which plunged the island in disorders from which it has been but recently beginning to emerge, amidst a doubtful and dangerous undulation. The unfortunate distinction which at once threw the insult and injury of doubt upon the loyalty of the English settlers, by an edict which forced them into the condition of enemies, followed and completed the steps of ruinous impolicy.

James, Second Earl of Ormonde.

BORN A. D. 1331—DIED A. D. 1383.

THE second earl of Ormonde was born at Kilkenny, October, 1331, and by his mother was descended from Edward I., that lady having been the daughter of Humphrey Bohun, earl of Essex, by the princess Elizabeth, the king's seventh daughter. From this he was commonly called the "noble earl." A still nobler appellation was given by the respect of his countrymen; to whom he was known by the popular title of "James the chaste;"—won, it is said, by his known character for modesty and virtue.

His guardianship was committed, by king Edward III., to the earl of Desmond, for the sum of 2,300 marks, in 1344, at which time he was in his thirteenth year: this wardship, however, was forfeited by Desmond's rebellion in the following year, and afterwards committed to Sir* John Darcy, when he came over as lord justice. Sir John married him to his daughter; and, as he was but fourteen when committed to him, the marriage was perhaps early enough to account for some part of the virtue for which he is commemorated. He received large additions to his estates from both Edward and Richard; and, in 1359, was appointed lord justice of Ireland, but in a short time was recalled, and the earl of Kildare appointed as his deputy. One of the many characteristic features of this immediate time, was the rapid change of governors; that which we here mention was the eighth within ten years previous.

In 1360, he returned and distinguished himself honourably against the Irish in Ulster, Munster, and Leinster. But the disorders of Ireland had now arisen to a height which appeared to demand strong measures; and Edward came to the determination of sending over his son, the duke of Clarence, whose large Irish possessions made it expedient that his interests should be personally attended to. To this prince, therefore, the government was to be committed, with a force sufficient to command respect and submission. Nothing that could conduce to the efficiency of this measure was omitted save one—the just and rational conception of the nature of the step, and of the conduct necessary to effect it. The measure was prudent in design, and the preparations were vigorous and adequate; 1500 English soldiers, the counsel and assistance of Ormonde, with the earl of Stafford, Sir John Carew, Sir William Windsore, and other eminent captains and coun-

* This person is the same called Sir Rodger, by Cox, p. 122.

sellors, were attached to the prince's army, with pay proportioned to their respective commands; that of the prince was thirteen shillings and four pence per day, that of Ormonde four shillings, with allowance for knights and soldiers under his orders. There can be little reasonable doubt, that a measure of this nature was necessary to secure the English settlers and reduce this distracted island to order; and that if carried into effect with vigour and prudence, and with a due regard to its only rational object, it might have been the means of changing the whole fatal and disastrous course of Irish history into a peaceful progress towards national order and prosperity. But the councils of Lionel were perverted by ignorance of the true condition of the country, and an unfortunate disregard to policy, prudence, or any wise or just object. Party distinction, the constitutional canker which has blighted the growth of Ireland, was then already far advanced in its accursed development. Springing naturally from the animosities of rival races—left too long to work unchecked by any pressure of a governing authority—it was now to receive a fresh impulse from the hand that should repress it. It was not then as thoroughly understood as it has since become, through a hapless experience, that distinctions between classes, however little founded in nature or fact, may become the means of national convulsions more violent, extensive, and lasting, than want, oppression, and all the evils which tyranny can inflict. The Irish policy of Edward, if the name of policy can be given to the hasty expedients of inconsiderate anger, was characterized by this hapless oversight. Instead of seasonable conciliation, accompanied by the stern and unbending control which alone gives weight and effect to conciliation—men being in this, as children, easily satisfied with those to whom they must bend, and impossible to be appeased by any length of concession when they are allowed to tyrannize—Edward himself entered into the feelings of party, and adopted the most irritating and insulting distinctions in his ordinances and proclamations; and though repeatedly compelled to retract and explain away his laws, still returned to the same impolitic and ignorant distinctions. The first acts of Lionel throw a strong light on this policy, as they clearly manifest the mist of prejudice as to Ireland which surrounded the English court. The recent prejudice amongst the middle classes in England, which is expressed in the popular cant phrase, "the wild Irish," is far more founded in certain realities than the pernicious prejudice which dictated lord Lionel's first step: by a proclamation, he forbade all the old English settlers, or any of the king's subjects of Irish birth, from approaching his camp. Such a proclamation suggests, and must have suggested the question, *what he came for?* and was equally adapted to excite resentment and awaken distrust. It is probable that it would have leagued the Irish barons against him, but that they felt themselves secure in their knowledge of the result of the prince's imprudence; and it may be, that from their retirements they looked with a vindictive satisfaction on the consequences of an offence which must bring its own punishment.

Deaf to counsel, and listening only to the suggestions of those whose ignorance and prejudices confirmed his own, prince Lionel traversed the country to attack the chief of Thomond. He was alike ignorant

of the ground through which he was to march, and of the species of warfare he was to encounter; and his youthful confidence was blindly urged on by the presumption of those who had never before seen the country. The immediate consequences were such as might be presumed. The Irish hovered about his camp, and practised on his little army all the well known resources and stratagems of their desultory warfare;—making sudden attacks and eluding all resistance; cutting off stragglers or detached bodies; intercepting supplies, and occupying dangerous passes. His soldiers, unaccustomed to fight an invisible enemy and receive blows that could not be returned, hampered in their movements and contracted in their provisions, became discouraged and malecontent. Numbers deserted, and numbers were slain by surprises—of which one was nearly fatal.

Prince Lionel recovered from his mistakes and retrieved his errors—so far as battles won and honours gained could retrieve so lasting an injury. But the results of this could not be immediately understood; and the insult seemed to be wiped out with its consequences, when the prince, sensible of the mistake he had committed, did tardy justice to the offended feelings of the Irish barons. They were called by proclamation to his standard, and Lionel turned the scale in his favour. It is no part of our present design to enter into the account of wars, unattended with any permanent result or special interest. The natural effects of military success followed—a season of quiet and the honours and flatteries attendant on success in arms. Justice requires that it should be added, that the prince's conduct was personally unexceptionable; he preserved discipline, and restrained those abuses which make war so much more dreadful to the quiet inhabitants of a country which has the misfortune to be the seat of war, than to those who are defeated in the ranks.

He was recalled into England, but a subtle poison was left in the nation's heart. The terms "English by birth" and "English by race," were become party terms with all the fatal power of names. King Edward saw what could not be now concealed, and he adopted the laughable resource of forbidding the freedom of speech—"He commanded that no English subject, born in England or in Ireland, should make or cause dissension, raise debate or contumely, under the penalty of imprisonment for two years."*

Prince Lionel was succeeded by the earl of Ormonde, who, in the mean time, had very much distinguished himself by his valour, prudence, and activity. In 1362, he gained a great victory over MacMurrough at Teigstaffen, in the county of Kilkenny, in which six hundred of the Irish force were slain.† He now, on being made lord deputy, received from king Edward permission to purchase land to the amount of £60 per annum, notwithstanding the statute that no officer should purchase within his own jurisdiction.‡

Ormonde was soon superseded by the return of the duke, who did not remain long; and on his departure, committed the imprudence, so often recurring in the history of the time, of intrusting the administration to a person without rank or property. In the next three years,

* Leland, from Rymer, tom. vi. p. 442.

† Lodge.

‡ Cox.

therefore, disorders rose to their usual height, and the dissensions among the English became serious and alarming. These dissensions, the chief cause of the calamities of Ireland, called out for immediate interference, and in 1367, lord Lionel was again sent over. This prince, who was not deficient in virtue or prudence, had now acquired some adequate idea of the condition of the country he came to govern. He saw as far, perhaps, as the knowledge of the times permitted, into the true interests of the country; and, although his measures fell far short of the purpose, yet it must be allowed, that, so far as they went, they were rightly conceived. He saw the necessity of reforming the destructive abuses which had crept into the English pale, which was degenerating into the total barbarism of the surrounding septs; and for this purpose a parliament was convened, and the STATUTE OF KILKENNY passed. The statute was beneficial and necessary; but it was only remedial to certain abuses which no legal enactment could repress more than transiently, while their causes remained in a vicious state of things. An impolitic distinction was preserved even in the language of this statute. The Irish laws, customs, and connexions, which had been so pernicious in their effects upon the English, were prohibited. But in these measures they overlooked the necessary effects of the close contact of two races so essentially distinct in national character and customs—the temptations to their assimilation; and, above all, the small effect which enactments can have in a lawless state of society. No wise provision was therefore made to reverse the fatal process that was in operation—to civilize the Irish, instead of vainly aiming to arrest the degeneracy of the English, while all its causes remained. A law to arrest contagion from a permitted contact, could have no beneficial result; nor could any permanent good be effected by any measure, which left two contending races, having different laws and degrees of civilization, to exercise on each other the alternating influences of contention, or of more permanently injurious alliances. There could be no prudence in any course of policy which fell short of the reduction of the Irish to English law. Next to this, undoubtedly, we must admit the wisdom of a statute which restrained the connexion which degraded the English; it had a temporary good effect, and was long looked on as a beneficent and wise measure. A summary of its provisions will give the clearest view of the state of things it was designed to amend.

The preamble declares the degeneracy of the English, whom it describes as having become mere Irish in language, manners, customs, and dress, by their alliance with the Irish and adoption of their laws. It proceeds in several enactments to remedy these evils; condemning and making penal the use of Brehon law: intermarriage, fosterage, and gossipage with the Irish, were made treasonable offences. The use of Irish language and dress, or the adoption of Irish names, or of Irish manners or customs, were subjected to the penalty of forfeiture or imprisonment. Disputes were ordered to be tried by the English law alone, and any admission of Irish jurisdiction was declared treasonable. To permit the Irish to graze on their lands, or to nominate them to ecclesiastical preferment, was subjected to severe penalties. It was also forbidden, under heavy penalties, to entertain the bards,

travelling minstrels, or story-tellers. Other enactments of more obvious policy, guarded against the oppressions which were practised under the sanction of the military levies, and wardens were appointed to control and regulate the exactions on the score of military preparation. It seems to have been inferred by some writers, that this statute was designed to apply to the whole of the country; but, not to consider the objection which is drawn by Leland from a consideration of the actual jurisdiction of the king of England—an argument of small weight—the intent, terms, and whole sense of the statute, contradict such a notion, which confounds the *distinction* which it is the essential purpose of the statute to maintain. A law to prevent certain affinities with the Irish, could not, by any rational interpretation, comprehend them.

The truth of most immediate importance to the estimation of such measures is this, that the presence of an authoritative governor, whose personal weight and influence were sufficient to conciliate respect, was sure to be attended by order, and the cessation of the more aggravated crimes and disturbances which the return of a feeble and inefficient administration was always sure to restore. Thus was prosperity occasional, and degeneracy progressive; each successive governor found a more desperate and difficult state of things to encounter; and other fatal resources began to be systematically adopted. These we shall have to notice but too often and too long.

In the year 1372, Ormonde was made constable of the castle of Dublin, with a fee of eighteen pounds five shillings per annum. He sat in the parliament summoned by Richard II. In 1381, he had a commission to treat with the rebels, and grant safe-conducts in order to reform them and promote peace. He died at Knoctopher, in the county of Kilkenny, in 1383, and was buried in the cathedral of St Canice, in the city of Kilkenny.

Maurice, Fourth Earl of Kildare.

DIED A. D. 1390.

NOT to re-enter upon the petty distractions in which this eminent warrior took a leading part—the wars with O'Dempseys and O'Mores, and other lesser Irish chiefs, whose insurrections he suppressed—it may be considered as a title to a niche among the illustrious of his age, that he attended king Edward III., at the siege of Calais, and was knighted for his valour in the high station of command to which he was appointed by the sagacity of that warlike monarch. In 1350, he was appointed to the government of Ireland, with the annual fee of £500. After this he was successively appointed again, in 1371 and 1375.

In the reign of Richard II., he was summoned to meet him in parliament, at Castle-Dermott, Dublin and Naas. We shall here avail ourselves of this memoir, to give a brief sketch of the Irish history of this ill-fated and weak monarch, whose character appears to less disadvantage in this country than in England.

At the accession of Richard, two principal evils marked the decline,

and menaced the existence of the English colony in Ireland. The greater proprietors had begun to absent themselves from their Irish estates, and the native chiefs had not only to a great extent resumed the possession of the territories which they or their fathers had anciently held, but were even enabled to exact from the English no small revenue, as the price of forbearance and protection.

The settlers, in this state of things, were loud in petition and remonstrance; and various well-directed, but unfortunate or insufficient remedies were tried. It is unnecessary to dwell on the successive nominations of governors who did not govern, or whose short sojourn had no result that can be called historical. The administration of Sir Philip Dagworth might be expanded into a frightful picture of oppression and extortion, under the sanction of authority. But unhappily we want no such examples. The earl of Oxford was appointed with kingly powers, and for a time governed by his deputies.

Sir John Stanley was next deputy, and was followed by the earl of Ormonde. Both conducted the confused and sinking interests of the country with prudence and spirit; and the consequences were such as to exemplify the important necessity of the presence of such men. The powerful O'Neill soon surrendered, and entered into engagements of submission and loyalty.

These advantages were not equivalent to their cost. Applications for money on the pretence of Irish affairs, became a grievance, and the subject of frequent remonstrance. On the other hand, the petitions of the Irish became louder and more urgent. The duke of Gloucester volunteered his services; they were accepted. Preparations were made; and, from the weight of the duke's character, for spirit and ability, the best consequences were not unreasonably anticipated. But suddenly, when all was ready, the king announced his intention to undertake the expedition in person. This resolution has been attributed by some writers to fear of the talent and ambition of his uncle, by others, with more apparent justice, to mortified vanity. His application to be elected emperor of Germany, drew from the electors a charge of incapacity; they refused to weigh the claims of a prince who could not recover the dominions of his ancestors in France. Richard was resolved to repel the imputation by heroic enterprise, but discreetly selected Ireland as a field more appropriate to his abilities. Ample preparations were made; and, in October, 1394, he landed at Waterford, with four thousand men at arms and thirty thousand archers, an army sufficient, in competent hands and with rightly aimed intentions, to place the fortunes of Ireland on the level of a secure and prosperous progress to civil tranquillity, order, and liberty. He was attended by the duke of Gloucester, the earls of Rutland, Nottingham, and other persons of distinction and rank.

Resistance was, of course, not for a moment contemplated. The Irish chiefs contended in the alacrity and humility of their submission; but there was no presiding wisdom in the councils of Richard—all the ability was on one side. The chiefs made ostentatious concessions of all that was required, but which really amounted to nothing. Truth and the faith of treaties were wanting. They proposed to do homage, to pay tribute, and to keep the peace; and these specious offers

satisfied the feeble understanding of Richard. This weak and vain monarch—softened by their flatteries and seeming submission, and impatient to secure a nominal advantage—shut out from his mind the whole experience of the past, which left no shadow of doubt on the absurdity of any hope that such pledges would be regarded a moment after they could be broken with impunity. The supposition that they were sincere was an unpardonable imbecility. The stern and clear-sighted father of this infatuated prince would, under the same circumstances, have at once seen and consulted the interests of both English and Irish, and acted with a just and merciful rigour. He would have flung aside with merited disregard, the artful offers of a pretended submission, and for ever placed it beyond the power of any chief or baron to enact the crimes of royalty on the scale and stage of plunderers. Instead of receiving pledges, he would have dismembered territories extensive beyond any object but military power. Whether or not, in effecting this essential object, this rigorous king would have consulted expediency without regard to justice, we cannot determine; but of this we are convinced, that the measure required might have been effected without any wrong. It would be easy to show, that a distinction between actual property available for domestic, social, and personal expenditure, and extensive territorial and fiscal jurisdiction, might have been made the basis of a settlement as equitable as the intent of the king might have admitted. The policy of Edward would, it is probable, have secured the prosperity and peace of the country, on a surer, though, according to our view, less equitable basis, by allotting the estates of those robber kings to English settlers. But whatever view a more deep consideration of the state of affairs might have suggested, one thing admits of no question. The territorial jurisdiction of the Irish chiefs was equally inconsistent with the improvement of the Irish, or the peace of their English neighbours. It was a state equally incompatible with progress or civil order; and although it may be made a question, what right a nation has to invade the country of another, under any circumstances but retaliation—yet it is a question, which, if not rendered absurd by the history of every civilized nation, is surely set at rest by established tenure. The English colony was settled not merely by usurpation, but on the faith of treaties and voluntary cessions, as well as cessions by conquest; the claim which it had to its possessions, was not inferior to any other. Considering this, there can be no doubt, according to the severest view of national equity, that a neighbouring territory, existing in a state of *continued aggression*, assuming the *rights of forcible exaction*, could have no claim to any justice but that which resistance and the privileges of armed interference give. Such privileges are rigidly commensurate with the necessity of the case.

The occasion was one which admitted of a just and lenient policy, and such alone seems to us to have been called for. The whole nation might have been reduced to one policy and government, and all its factious chiefs deprived of the very name of power. It is easy to see and point out the disadvantages to be apprehended from any course; but it was a time pregnant with change and the seeds of change, and the question which lay open, was the settlement most likely to put an

end to disorder and secure permanent good. An occasion was lost which could never come, unless with the most deplorable train of national calamities. In a state of order, it is unsafe and unjust to tamper with the rights of persons—the error of modern times: rebellion, which is a state of crime against established rights, is attended by the forfeiture of all right, and war is attended by the rights of conquest; on either supposition, it was the time to enforce these rights for the common good.

The Irish chiefs made such specious excuses, as are always ready for credulous ears, and offered submission in every form. They did homage on their knees—unarmed, uncovered, and ungirdled, and received the kiss of peace from the lord marshal. They resigned all lands which they held in Leinster, pledged themselves to military service, and were bound by indenture to adhere to the treaty thus made. But the weak king engaged to pay them pensions, and gave them leave to make conquests among “his enemies in other provinces,” thus annulling the little value of this nugatory agreement. Seventy-five little kings thus submitted, all of whom were the absolute despots of their own small dominions, and spent their lives in the business of petty wars and depredations.

Richard, fully satisfied with his exploits, completed the favourable impression which his power and magnificence had made, by holding his court in Dublin. There he indulged his vanity in a weak and profuse luxury. The Irish chiefs flocked to his court, where they were received with ostentatious kindness; and disguised their wonder and admiration, by a well-assumed deportment of grave and haughty dignity. Four of the principal chiefs were, with some difficulty, prevailed on to allow themselves to be knighted. They expressed surprise that it could be thought that they could receive additional honour from a ceremony which they had undergone in their youth, after the manner of their fathers. O’Niall, O’Conor, O’Brian, and M’Murchard, were induced to submit to receive the honour in due form from king Richard. On these, knighthood—then the most honourable distinction, though now sadly fallen from its rank—was solemnly conferred in St Patrick’s cathedral; after which they were feasted, in their ceremonial robes, by the king.

Richard was immediately after obliged to return to England. The Irish chiefs were urged to perform the only part of their promises which had any meaning. But the single motive which had weight with them was gone; they temporized a little, and then refused. Oppression and hostility recommenced their old round, and things relapsed into their wonted condition.

These disorders quickly rose to their height. De Burgo, Birmingham, and Ormonde, exerted themselves, and gained great advantages, which were more than counterbalanced by a defeat, in which many of the king’s forces, among whom were forty gentlemen of rank and property,* were slain by the O’Tooles. The earl of Marche, who was left by Richard in the government, proceeding rashly, and in perfect ignorance of the country, was surprised and slain.

* Cox.

Kildare took a prominent part, and distinguished his valour, activity, and fidelity through the whole of these proceedings. He was rewarded for his services, and the great expenses he had incurred were reimbursed by the grant of a rich wardship in Kildare and Meath, of the estates of Sir John de Loudon; and subsequently by the grants of several Irish manors in the county of Dublin, to be held for ever of the crown *in capite*.* He died in 1390, and was buried in the church of the Holy Trinity, in Dublin.

Gerald, Fourth Earl of Desmond.

DIED A. D. 1397.

THIS earl is not only memorable for the prominent place he held in the troubled events of Irish history, during his long life—a distinction more unusual graces the history of his life. He was among the learned men of his age, and obtained the popular title of the poet. Considering the state of poetry then, the honour is doubtful; but Gerald was evidently a person of some taste and talent. He is said to have been well versed in mathematics, and was thought by the people to be a conjuror. He was lord justice in 1367, and distinguished for diligence and success in preserving the peace of the districts where his property lay. His death was, in some degree, suitable to his popular reputation for magic: in 1397, he went away from his camp, and was seen no more. The conjecture, that he was privately murdered, admits of little doubt.

Thomas, Sixth Earl of Desmond.

DIED A. D. 1420.

THE history of this most unfortunate nobleman might, without any departure from its facts, be easily dilated into a tragic romance. This is, however, not our design. A brief outline must be sufficient; and will add to the conception of the unhappy state of manners and morals, for which we have chiefly selected the statements of the more recent memoirs.

Thomas, the sixth earl of Desmond, succeeded his father John, who was drowned in leading his army across the ford of Ardfinnan, in the river Suir, in 1399. He was left a minor and very young, and became an object of dark plots and manœuvres to his uncle James, an ambitious, active-spirited, and intriguing character. The license of the times was such as to leave the weak at the mercy of the strong; and for those whose craft or prudence were insufficient to protect them, there was no safeguard in law, and little refuge in the affection or honour of those who might despoil them safely. But there seems to have been in this family a singular prevalence of ambition, tur-

* Lodge, Archdall.

bulence, and tendency to lawlessness, that might at first sight lead the careless observer to infer the existence of some family idiosyncrasy of temper, that incessantly urged its members on some lawless or eccentric course. But the fact is—and though an obvious fact, it is worth reflection—that the remote and comparatively Irish connexion and property of this great branch of the Geraldines, must have had the main influence at least in the determination of this temper. The tendencies of the mind are the results very much of circumstances, acting in such a manner on a few elementary dispositions, as often to produce from the very same dispositions the opposite extremes of character. From hence the dark enigmas of human conduct and the injustice of human judgments.

Thomas, earl of Desmond, appears to have been a weak but not unamiable person, and devoid of the firmness and craft which his time and situation required. To make these effects the more unfortunate, his uncle chanced to be unusually endowed with the qualities in which his nephew was wanting. Lawless, audacious, crafty, and ambitious, it seems to be a matter of course that he should contemplate the facile and weak nature of his youthful kinsman as an object of speculation; and that, seeing the possibility of setting aside one so exposed to the approach of guile, so accessible to folly and indiscretion, he should have long made it a principal object of scheme and calculation. Such, indeed, are the strong moral inferences from the facts.

The occasions thus sought could not long be wanting, and it is probable that they were well prepared for. The unfortunate youth, in one of his hunting excursions, was driven by the weather to take shelter in the house of a tenant of his own, named M'Cormac. There he fell violently in love with Katharine M'Cormac, the beautiful daughter of his host. He made his passion known; but the virtue of Katharine was proof against such addresses, as it was customary for persons of her degree to receive from those of the earl's princely quality. At this remote period, it is impossible to say by what intermediate practices the circumstance may have been improved by his enemies—how far underhand agency may have worked on the girl or on the young lord. No supposition is necessary to account for the impulse of romantic passion, the self-reliance of beauty, or the firmness of female virtue; but we must confess a disposition to suspect a more artful and complicated chain, because such is also but too derivable from the position of all the parties of this romance of antiquity.

Whatever was the working of circumstances, the facts are certain. Thomas married the fair Katharine M'Cormac. The consequences quickly followed, and were so far beyond the probable effects of such an act, that they seem to justify the suspicions which attribute the whole transaction to an intrigue. The outcry of his dependents, followers, and relations, immediately arose, to a degree of animosity not quite to be accounted for from the fact or the prejudices of the time. A time so lawless, of morals so coarse, and manners so unrefined, was not likely to produce so violent and universal a sense of resentment on account of a misalliance, humiliating to the pride of family, even though such a feeling was the best developed sentiment

of that barbaric age. Such may indeed have been the fact; but it seems to demand too much allowance for any supposable public feeling.

James, the ambitious uncle, of course assumed the tone of one deeply offended and outraged by a match so derogatory to his family. It seemed but natural for him to vent his spleen, to express his contempt and indignation, to lament the family honour stained in its representative, and the followers and subjects dishonoured in their leader. There was a fertile topic of popular indignation in the elevation of a dependent to the invidious distinction of a superior, to be worshipped and honoured by those who were her superiors and equals. And every one is aware, for it is the main lesson of modern history, that no sentiment can be too trivial, or opinion too fallacious, to convulse the public mind if managed with sufficient address. The ferment swelled on and became inflamed to fury under the dexterous influence of the crafty and specious James. A formidable party was soon raised, and the unhappy youth was obliged to escape from his own territories. Probably the opinion of the large majority of orderly persons was in his favour: but orderly people are too passive to produce any public effect; the voice of the public is seldom heard above the uproar of the unprincipled and disorderly—the froth and scum that floats upon its surface. A few turbulent spirits were enough for the earl; and when the unfortunate youth had not prudence and firmness to stand his ground and fight his own battle, these daily increased; and the feeling became general because it was unopposed.

Thrice earl Thomas ventured back in the vain hope that the clamour had died away, and each time he was obliged to fly from a fiercer appearance of hostility. His uncle openly took the lead in enmity; and at last so effectually terrified him, that he was compelled to save himself by a formal surrender of his title and territories.

There could be indeed little regard to law, or any principle of justice, at a time when such a surrender was formally made in the presence of some of the noblest and most dignified persons then living. The earl of Ormonde was a witnessing party to the transaction. One consequence of this, however, was the just stipulation by which the son of the young earl was endowed with the manors of Moyallow, Broghill, and Kilcolnan.*

The deposed earl went to conceal his shame and grief at Rouen, in Normandy. There he died in 1420. His son, Maurice, was ancestor to the Fitz-Geralds of Broghill; and John, his second son, to the Adairs of Ireland and Scotland.†

James, Seventh Earl of Desmond.

DIED A. D. 1462.

THE circumstances related in the previous memoir form a consistent portion of the history of James, the succeeding earl of Desmond,

* Lodge.

† Ibid.

and settle the propriety of following them up with the remainder of his life. This must now be briefly done. His first care was to obtain a parliamentary confirmation of a title thus unfairly acquired. This was not a matter of any difficulty. His popularity, it will be easily understood, was great in Ireland; for the elements of his character were of the most popular kind—craft, audacity, and restless turbulence. He was a dangerous enemy and a useful friend. He gained the favour of the English sovereigns by his activity and success in quelling such disturbances as were not raised by his own ambition. He was favoured by the earl of Ormonde, who stood high with the kings of the house of Lancaster. From him he obtained the seneschalship of his lordships of Imokilly, Inchicoin, and the town of Youghall. On the 12th of June, 1438, Robert Fitz-Geoffry de Cogan granted to him all his lands in Ireland, being half the county of Cork; of which, by virtue of a letter of attorney, he took possession in the year following.* Of this transaction, a probable conjecture is, that the grant was forged. It was prejudicial to the legal claims of the De Courcys and Carews. Thus raised to wealth and territorial power beyond the rank of a subject, he lived in kingly though rude splendour, and exercised uncontrolled a regal power over these large territories. To screen himself the more effectually from all question, he kept aloof from the seat of administration, and employed his influence at court, through the friendship of the earl of Ormonde, so effectively as to obtain, in 1444, a patent for the government of the counties of Limerick, Waterford, Cork, and Kerry,† with a licence, on the ground of this duty, to absent himself during life from all parliaments, sending a sufficient proxy; and to purchase any lands he pleased, by what service soever they were holden of the king.‡

He married a daughter of Ulick de Burgo (MacWilliam Eighth), by whom he left two sons and two daughters, and died in 1462. He was buried in the friary at Youghall.

Art M'Murchard.

DIED A. D. 1422.

Of the Irish chieftains at this period, any information to be obtained is unsatisfactory; and we are compelled to pass them in silence, from the very desultory nature of our information. We have already had occasion to name M'Murchard amongst those Irish chiefs who were knighted by king Richard.

It is unnecessary to detail the circumstances which so soon brought Richard back to Ireland, 1399; here alone he found even the shadow of honour or success. At this period, M'Murchard is represented as heading a strong force of his country against the English. His pride and sense of independence were deeply offended by the submissions he had been compelled to make; and neither the vows of allegiance and fealty, the pension of 80 merks, the honour of knighthood, nor even the

* Lodge, 67.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

considerations of prudence, were sufficient to control his impatience to fling off the imputation of a yoke, and wash out the stain of submission, by the unconscious guilt of perjury and shame of falsehood.

For any open course of resistance on the battle-field, he had not, however, sufficient means. He therefore had recourse to the well-known system of light-heeled, though not unsoldier-like tactics of flying and ambushed war that had so often perplexed and endangered the soldiers of Fitz-Stephen and Strongbow. With a force of three thousand men he took his post among the woods. The English, as they approached, were surprised with the apparition of a well appointed army drawn up along the forest edge, and seeming by their soldier-like order, and intrepid front, prepared to offer immediate battle. The appearance was illusory. As the English captains drew up their troops in order of battle, their enemies melted away into the darkness of the woods.

This incident elated Richard, who celebrated his triumph by the creation of several knights; among whom was Henry of Lancaster, whose father was at the moment preparing dethronement and disgrace for the feeble Richard, while he was vapouring about the fancied discomfiture of an enemy who despised him.

Richard ordered a large body of peasants to open a lane through the impervious woods; and, when this insane order was executed, he had the childish temerity to lead his army into a defile, aptly contrived for the destruction of its designer. The English troops were soon entangled in the miry passes of a labyrinth of thickets, lined with invisible enemies—of hollow morasses and impeded ways, where it was as hard to return as to proceed. At every point of disorder they were assailed with sudden irruptions of the enemy, who rushed out into the entangled and struggling crowd with astonishing force and noise, and cast their darts with deadly effect. Under such circumstances, any force of ordinary numbers must have fallen a sacrifice to the rashness of their leader. The army of Richard was too strong to be beaten under any disadvantage by a tumultuary crowd, whose strength was the concealment from which they made attacks which were rather directed to cut off stragglers, than to make any impression on the main host. There was, therefore, no hope of gaining any decided advantage; and the chiefs of M'Murchard's army were most of them impressed with a sense of the danger of provoking the hostility of the English to extremities. Many of them came of their own accord, to make their peace with Richard; they appeared with halters round their necks and threw themselves at his feet to implore for pardon and mercy. Richard's anger was quickly appeased through the easy approach of his vanity. M'Murchard was formally summoned to submit, but the summons was deprived of its authority and dignity by the accompaniment of large offers. M'Murchard was, in his own way, as vain as his antagonist; and he saw the increasing distresses of the English. Richard had, in his thoughtless impetuosity, neglected to observe, that the scene of such long-continued wars and disturbances could not supply the wants of his army. This oversight was not lost upon the sagacity of M'Murchard, who anticipated the sure consequences, and was thus encouraged in the course of resistance he had pursued. There seems indeed to

have been throughout, a struggle between pride and prudence in the mind of this chief; he saw his advantages, but seems to have hesitated in their use—whether to obtain a beneficial compromise, or to win the name of a heroic resistance. The temptation to this latter vain course was very great. There was a dearth amounting to famine in Richard's camp: his men were perishing from want—the horses were become unfit for service—a general discontent possessed the army—the very knights complained of hardships unattended with the chance of honour. It became a necessity to change their quarters. M'Murchard saw the advantageous occasion which was unlikely to recur, as Richard's distresses must end with his arrival in Dublin. The plunder of some vessels, laden with a scanty supply of provisions, by his own soldiers, decided the king; and the Irish chief who wavered to the last moment, now sent in to desire a safe-conduct, that he might treat for peace. The duke of Gloucester was sent to meet him and settle the terms. The meeting has been described, by a historian of the time, with graphic precision; the description, though assimilated to caricature by some touches of grotesque truth, affords a curious gleam of the social state of the Irish of that generation, and is equally interesting for the lively portrait it gives of the ancient barbaric chief: the ostentatious and flourishing extravagance of barbarian vanity cannot be mistaken, and the portrait is altogether full of uncouth nature and truth. The Irish king darted forth from a mountain, surrounded by the forests which concealed his forces; he was mounted on a strong and swift horse, and rode without stirrups. A vast mantle covered his person with its ample folds, but did not conceal the strong mould of his tall and well-proportioned frame, "formed for agility and strength." As he approached with the rapidity of a warrior about to charge, he waved proudly to his followers to halt; and, darting the spear which he grasped in his right hand, with the display of much force and skill, into the ground, he rushed forward to meet the English knight, who stood more entertained than awed by this formidable exhibition of native energy.

The treaty ended in nothing; the prudence of M'Murchard was uncertain and wavering, his pride and prurient haughtiness were in permanent inflammation. The hero outweighed the statesman, and he could not resist the opportunity for a display of kingly loftiness. He offered submission, for such was the purpose of his coming, but he refused to be shackled by stipulation or security. His insolence quickly terminated a conference in which no terms could be agreed upon, and each party returned to their own camps.

M'Murchard had now plainly involved himself in a condition of which, in the ordinary course, ruin must have soon followed. The king was infuriated; and an adequate force, intrusted to a leader of ordinary skill and knowledge of the country, would soon have deprived him of every rood of territory. But circumstances, stronger than the arms and pride of M'Murchard or the anger of Richard, now interfered.

Richard remained in Dublin, and was engaged in the arrangements for the vindication of his authority, and the indulgence of revenge. But his power was come to its end; and he was already devoted to the hapless fate which he was meditating for an inferior. The continued

prevalence of stormy weather had for some weeks prevented all intelligence from England; at length it came, and he learned that he was ruined.

The story of his return, and the sad particulars which followed, belong to English history, and are known to the reader.

Of the subsequent history of this chief we find but occasional tracks at remote intervals. In the following reign, during one of those occasional fits of vigour which a little retarded the decline of the English pale, his obstinate disaffection received a transient check. He exulted in the reputation of having alone, of all his fellow-countrymen, held out against the force and power of the English, and having foiled the power of the king at the head of thirty thousand men. This was the more galling to the English, as his territory lay within the pale. He was the only chief who refused to make submission to the duke of Lancaster; and as such submissions were in few instances more than nominal, he found no difficulty in seducing many of the others to join him. At the head of these he defied the government. Stephen Scrope, who was at the time deputy to the duke, called a parliament in Dublin, which was adjourned to Trim, to consider the best means for the defence of the country. The Irish barons Ormonde, Desmond, the prior of Kilmainham, and other nobles and gentlemen, joined such troops as they could collect, and marched against M'Murchard. The whole force of these leaders was but slight, and the Irish chief was enabled to present a formidable resistance. The first encounter was seemingly doubtful, and the little army of the English was compelled to give way before the impetuous onset of M'Murchard's host; but the steadiness of the English soon turned the foaming and roaring current of a tumultuous onset, and the Irish fled before them. O'Nolan and his son were taken, and many slain. But the English were prevented from following up their fortune. Accounts reached them on the field of other disturbances in the county of Kilkenny: they were obliged to make a forced march against O'Carrol, whom they slew, with eight hundred of his men; but M'Murchard was nothing the worse. A defeat was nothing to the Irish chief while he could save himself; his army was a mob that easily collected and scattered.

The power of the English was now far on the wane; their moments of vigour were desultory, and their effects were more than counteracted by the lengthened intervals of neglect and weakness. Henry IV. appears to have been both careless and ignorant about the interests of the Irish settlers; and the wisdom and valour of the best governors and deputies, were unable to obtain more than a respite from the ruin that was coming on with uniform progress.

Talbot, lord Furnival, came over; and to show, in a very forcible point of view, what might be done by skill and prudence with adequate means, without any force but what could be raised among the inhabitants of the pale, he managed by judiciously directed and alert movements to repress the insubordination of the Irish chiefs. And there cannot be a more unequivocal test of the efficacy of his conduct, than the submission of M'Murchard, who gave up his son as a hostage.

The remainder of M'Murchard's life was probably spent in quiet. In 1423 we find his successor, Gerald Kavenagh, succeeding to his

pension of eighty merks; and infer that his death must have occurred about the same time.

Walter, Ninth Lord Louth.

DIED A. D. 1428.

THIS baron was a conspicuous actor in the period in which we are now engaged. His actions might supply us with many curious and interesting details, had we not resolved to pass through the history of this century with the least possible detail, and to confine ourselves to a few leading events, which we must refer to the lives of the several persons who bore the chief part in them.

This eminent nobleman was popularly called *Walter More*, which Lodge interprets, "the Great."^{*} We rather suspect, however, that the Irish idea of greatness was confined to stature; at least such is certainly the ordinary application of the term "More." He was ninth in succession from the illustrious warrior, Sir John Birmingham, who gained the battle of Athenry, and defeated Bruce. He was appointed sheriff for life of Connaught. He commanded, with Sir Thomas de Burgo, the force which gained a victory in 1397, over M'Conn, and slew nine hundred of his men. He died 1428, and was buried at Athenry.

James, Fourth Earl of Ormonde.

DIED A. D. 1451.

As we approach the decline of English power in Ireland, the variety of names diminishes; and the only persons whose character, station, or personal remembrance entitles them to notice, at least to any distinct notice, will be found chiefly to fall under one of the two great races of Geraldine and Butler. Of these even, little is personally known that would be worthy of a distinct memoir, were it not that it is only by these memoirs that we are enabled to connect the history of the century now past, with that of a later period.

The history of James, fourth earl of Ormonde, has indeed a close and prominent connexion with that of his age. He was a man of considerable learning and ability, and was distinguished by an unusual share of royal favour. He was ward to Thomas, duke of Lancaster; by which fact it is ascertained, that he was yet a minor when appointed to the government of Ireland as lord deputy. In this capacity he held a parliament in Dublin, in which the statutes of Dublin and Kilkenny were confirmed.

In 1412, he accompanied the duke of Clarence into France, and rose into great favour with king Henry V., who began his reign in the same year. He seems to have remained in the English court until 1419, when king Henry sent him over as lord lieutenant of Ireland. Imme-

^{*} Lodge, iii. 41.

diately on landing, he held a parliament at Waterford, which granted the king two subsidies and seventy marks to himself. The pale was at the time kept in a state of terror by the septs of the O'Keillys, M'Mahons, and M'Murroughs. Ormonde marched against these and scattered their forces; in consideration of which services he received the sum of five hundred marks more, from the same parliament.*

The country had been for some time plunged into great distractions, not only from the increasing turbulence and encroachment of the surrounding septs; but there had been also serious discontents raised among the English of the pale, by a measure of the English court which may have been necessary, but was effected with inconsiderate violence. The poverty of the Irish, with the troubled state of the country, had the effect of driving numbers into England in search of a peaceable subsistence. This thronged resort brought with it many evils, particularly that of numerous troops of idle persons, who, failing to obtain bread by fair means, sought to live by begging and theft. It therefore became necessary to suppress the evil by some public measure. The parliament of England enacted a law by which this intercourse was forbidden, and all Irish adventurers were ordered to return home. The execution of this law was indiscriminate and insulting; students, and the children of the most respectable Irish families, although exempted by special provisions of the statute, were insolently driven from the inns of court. The same execrable policy was extended to Ireland; the administration became fenced round by illiberal prepossessions against every one of Irish birth, and the pernicious distinctions engrafted in the reign of Edward III., were ripened to the full maturity of their deleterious influence in that of his grandson. A petition was resolved upon, by a parliament held in Dublin, in the fourth year of king Henry V., who had just returned from the battle of Agincourt.† The Irish chancellor refused to authenticate this petition by the great seal; and by this cruel and impolitic refusal it need not be explained how the most dangerous and violent discontents were excited. It is probable that in this juncture the high influence of Ormonde was used with the king, and that the monarch was thus made sensible of the injustice of the harsh policy of the Irish government. It is also not unlikely that the service of fifteen hundred brave men of the pale, under the command of the warlike prior of Kilmainham, Thomas Butler, had weight with a military monarch. Ormonde was then sent over with full powers, to inquire into, and redress all complaints. His conduct was, under these circumstances, liberal and gracious, and was met with a thankful spirit by the Irish parliament. Their liberal grants we have already stated. Their petition was received, sealed, and transmitted. We are not enabled to ascertain what notice it received; but we extract Leland's summary of its contents as the briefest abstract we can offer of the state of the country at this time:—

“The petition, which is still extant, contains a pathetic representation of the distresses of his subjects in Ireland, harassed on one hand

* Lodge, from MS. annals in Trin. Col., Dublin.

† Leland, ii. 12, from Rob. Turr. Berm.

by the perpetual incursions of the Irish enemy, and on the other by the injustice and extortion of the king's ministers. The king's personal appearance in Ireland is most earnestly entreated, to save his people from destruction. As the Irish, who had done homage to king Richard, had long since taken arms against the English; notwithstanding their recognisances payable in the apostolic chamber, they beseech his highness to lay their conduct before the pope, and to prevail on the holy father to publish a crusade against them. The insolent opposition of Merbury to their former petition, is represented as a heinous offence, for which they desire that he may be cited to answer before the king. Stanely and Furnival, by name, are accused of the most iniquitous practices, for which they pray redress and satisfaction; and while honourable mention is made of the conduct of Crawly, archbishop of Dublin, as well as of their present governor—who they request may receive the royal thanks for his generous declarations to parliament—all the governors and officers sent from England, are represented as corrupt, rapacious, and oppressive; secreting and misapplying the revenue intrusted to them; defrauding the subject, and levying coyn and livery without mercy. The unreasonable exclusion of their students from the inns of court, the insufficiency and extortion of the officers of the exchequer, the number of absentees, and other matters of grievance are fully stated. They pray that those who hold of the king *in capite*, may not be exposed to the hardship of repairing to England in order to do homage, but that the chief governor be commissioned to receive it; that their commerce may be defended, their coin regulated, their churches supplied with faithful pastors, without such delays as they had experienced from selfish and designing governors. But above all things they urgently entreat that trusty commissioners be appointed to inspect the conduct of the king's officers sent into Ireland; plainly declaring that such a scene of various iniquities would be thus discovered, as were utterly abhorrent to the equity of the throne, and utterly intolerable to the subject."

The administration of Ormonde, was productive of much, though not permanent benefit to Ireland. His vigour and activity repressed the growing encroachment of the surrounding septs, and for a while deferred the total decline into which the pale was rapidly sinking. The general incapacity, ignorance, and interested conduct of the governors—the neglect of England and the degeneracy of the English settlers, who were become Irish in manner, custom, and affinity—contributed, with the increasing power of the native chiefs, to hasten the approaches of the melancholy period of national affliction and degradation, long approaching and now at hand. From such a state there were occasional and transitory revivals, which were just sufficient to indicate what was wanting to the restoration of the colony. The artful and ambitious earl of Desmond, who in his need had found a friend in the earl of Ormonde, contributed much, by his encroaching spirit, and the haughty isolation by which he kept up an independent state, to increase the difficulties of the time. A spirit of hostility grew up between these two powerful nobles, which was productive of much evil to their country, and of much trouble to Ormonde. The earl of Desmond, availing himself of the weakness of government, resisted his

efforts for the public good; or when occasion offered, endeavoured to bring him into discredit by intrigue, and seems to have been his constant opponent through the opposite changes of favour and disfavour. And from this appears to have arisen the chief vicissitudes of his personal history.

Lodge mentions that he was knighted in the fourth year of Henry VI., together with the king, by the regent, John duke of Bedford. And he adds, that this occurrence took place "before he attained his full age"—an affirmation which cannot be reconciled with the other circumstances here mentioned, with their dates from the same writer, even though we should take some liberty with these dates, to reconcile them. According to these, his first commission as lord deputy occurs in 1407, at which time, though still in his minority, he must at least have arrived at man's estate. Henry VI. was born in 1421 or 1422, when, on the lowest allowance, Ormonde must have been twenty-four years of age; that is allowing that he was lord deputy *at ten*. Adding nearly five years, we have the fourth year of Henry's reign, when Ormonde must have been, by the same allowance, twenty-eight. This error is rendered still more inextricable by the assertion, "after which, returning into Ireland, he accompanied the deputy Scrope, in his invasion of Macmurrough's territory." Now, this latter circumstance is placed, by Cox and Leland, in the year 1407, when he may have certainly assisted; but eighteen years before the period assigned. We should have set down this entanglement as a typographical error, substituting VI. for IV., as Scrope was deputy, and marched against M'Murhard, in 1407, the seventh or eighth year of Henry IV., when all the particulars were likely to have occurred. But this conjecture is baffled by the addition that he received the honour from the duke of Bedford, "the king's uncle and regent,"* who was appointed regent during the minority of Henry VI. All this is still further involved in difficulty by the complaint of Ormonde's enemies in 1445, "that he was old and feeble;" for if he is then assumed to have been sixty-five, he would have been of full age in 1407.

We are inclined to presume that the truth must be, that he was knighted by king Henry IV., previous to his coming over as lord deputy. The incident is of slight importance; we have dwelt upon it as a good illustration of the difficulty of being accurate, and of the perplexity often attendant on investigations, the importance of which cannot be considered equal to the time and labour lost in their prosecution.

At the death of Henry V., Ormonde was lord lieutenant of Ireland. He was continued but for a short time after the accession of Henry VI. The minority of this monarch, then but nine months old, led the English government, among other precautions against the danger of the existing claims of the house of York, to remove the heir of that family out of view, by sending him to Ireland. In pursuance of this policy, Edmund, earl of Marche, was sent, in 1422, as lord lieutenant; but his government was quickly terminated by his death. He died of the plague,† in his own castle of Trim, and was succeeded by lord

* Lodge.

† Cox. Ware notices this as the fourth pestilence in Ireland.—*Annals*.

Talbot, in 1425. But in the following year, he was superseded by Ormonde, who, in his turn made way for Sir John de Gray, who was succeeded by lord Dudley, Sir Thomas Stanley, Sir Christopher Plunkett, and others, with their deputies in rapid succession; during which, his own name occurs in its turn, at short intervals, until 1443, when he comes again more prominently on the scene.

At this time he was sent over with the privilege of absenting himself "for many years, without incurring the penalty of the statute of 3 Rich. II."* against absentees. It was at this time that he entered into strict alliance with the earl of Desmond, and contributed to raise him to a height of power, wealth, and influence, which were afterwards, with a fatal efficiency, directed against himself. Desmond, it appears, won his favour by joining him against the Talbots, then fast rising into authority. The vast grants and privileges thus conceded to Desmond, may be seen in our notice of that nobleman.

The vigour of Ormonde's administration, and his uniform adherence to the princes who, during this period, sat upon the throne, had raised many enemies against him. With this, he seems to have exercised his privileges with high and decisive energy, and perhaps too frequently to have allowed his measures to be governed by feuds and private friendships. This lax policy is, however, in some degree to be justified by the notions and practice of his age. By degrees a combination was formed against him, and representations, which we should not undertake to reject, were made to the English court, complaining of his being incompetent from age—of his partial appointments—his indulgence to the nobles whose parliamentary attendance he dispensed with for money—and lastly, for the wrongful imprisonment of subjects, for the sake of their ransom.† On these grounds they petitioned for his removal. This complaint of a powerful party, led on by the perfidious Desmond, who had been exalted above the condition of a subject by his friendship, gave serious alarm to the earl of Ormonde. He called a meeting of the nobility and gentry at Drogheda, to whom he made an appeal which was answered by a strong testimony to the uprightness and efficiency of his administration. We do not enter into its details for the same reason that we have passed lightly over the details of the complaint. They may both be regarded as the natural language of party spirit in all times; mostly having on each side strong grounds in truth, well mixed with misrepresentations often undesigned, often the contrary. The most satisfactory test of the truth of either charge or defence, must be drawn from the state of public affairs; so far as they may be assumed liable to be affected by the conduct of the public functionary. In the absence of this criterion, the rank and respectability of the parties, affords the best general ground of conjecture. Adopting such a criterion, we should incline towards a favourable judgment of this eminent nobleman.

The representations of his enemies had elicited, from the English court, an order for his attendance to answer for his alleged misconduct. His bold and frank appeal, with the declaration of a large body of the most reputable of the Irish nobles and ecclesiastics, caused

* Cox.

† Ib.

a suspension of this order. But the earl of Ormonde, with a magnanimous disregard of the secret and base underworking of a low faction, took no further care to guard against the designs of his enemies;—the faction went on, and gathered influence and weight. The same charges continued to be repeated, without meeting any answer; and the factious workings of those who made them increased into a state of popular turbulence, which it was impossible for one so involved as the earl of Ormonde to resist. His recall, therefore, became a matter of expediency not to be averted.

He was, accordingly, recalled, and lord Talbot sent over with seven hundred men. His arrival was greeted with clamour and insurrection. The English barons were leagued with the Irish chiefs in opposition to his government, thus affording, if it were necessary, the best vindication of the innocence and integrity of Ormonde's administration. Talbot commenced with vigour and efficiency, and quickly repressed or reduced the factious barons and rebellious chiefs—seizing on many, and putting some, especially of the Birminghams, to death.

His government was not, however, conducted on the most judicious or salutary principles. He kept the peace thus restored, by throwing himself into the hands of the popular faction, by which the earl of Ormonde had been persecuted; a faction which, more than any other cause in its own time, tended to precipitate the ruin of Ireland—the main disorders and sufferings of which, then, as well as before and since, have been mainly the result of a factious resistance to the operation of those principles on which civil order and national prosperity depend. If we admit that much evil has also arisen from causes of an opposite nature, we must at the same time insist, that such causes were the necessary result of those to which we have adverted. One extreme is resisted by another. There is mostly no other available resource.

At his return to England, Talbot had so far adopted the passions or prejudices of the party with which he acted, that he accused Ormonde of treason. The accusation was re-echoed with virulent animosity. The archbishop of Dublin seconded the representations of his brother, with a treatise on the maleadministration of Ormonde. The prior of Kilmainham added his voice, and challenged him to the combat. But Ormonde's character was unaffected by this clamour of malignity and envy: the clamour of faction had little weight against him, beyond the sphere of its own sound and fury. The king of England interposed, and for the time rescued the earl from an unworthy persecution: to this, historians attribute the attachment of the family of Butler to the Lancastrian race.

The great and celebrated dissensions between the houses of York and Lancaster were, at this time, in their beginning. They had been long anticipated in their causes by the fears and the wisdom of all who were capable of political observation. Their effect on Ireland was considerable and pernicious, and they occupy the attention of our historians, as fully as that of the writers of English history. They are, however, too well understood and known, to require that we should here enter into any detail; it will be enough to mark, as we pass along, the influence of the political occurrences of England on the state of Ireland. The same apprehensions which occasioned the

commission of the earl of Marche were still in force, but with added weight and justice. The feeble monarch who sat upon the British throne was surrounded with much increased difficulties and dangers; there was no vigour in his character or government to repress the animosity and ambitious restlessness of contested claims to the succession. The eagerness of party was already anticipating the vacancy of the throne; and intrigue was busy in spreading disaffection and complaint. The rights of the earl of Marche had devolved upon his cousin Richard, whose abilities made him formidable, while his worth and amiability made him the object of general regard. He had been sent to succeed the duke of Bedford in the government of France, where he had gained credit by the prudence and efficiency of his administration of affairs. His return to England was hailed by the wishes of his friends, and the fears of the rival house; and the contest, so soon to stain the country with its best blood, was loudly and openly carried on by clamour and intrigue.

The complaints of Ireland suggested the prudent measure of sending him over as governor. The measure had specious advantages according with the views of either side. It was an apparent advantage to the Lancasterian party, to occupy his ambition, and deprive his party of their head. But the appointment was accompanied with powers which, if dexterously used, might become dangerous. A considerable revenue, the power of raising a military force on full authority, sufficient pretext, and beyond the reach of immediate observation, were the amount of this prince's stipulations; to which was added the privilege of naming a deputy, and returning at pleasure.*

His first reception was doubtful, but the weight of his pretensions, and the splendour of his appointments, quickly turned the feather scale of public feeling in his favour. The advances of every party he received with frank and conciliatory affability, and ready kindness of manner. His Irish dependents crowded round him from his ample estates in Meath; and the Irish chiefs were agreeably surprised and captivated by attentions which they were unaccustomed to meet. He studied to receive and address them in accordance with their notions of their own rank and importance; and all parties were soon united in zeal and affection for his person. His deportment to the lords was also governed by a politic impartiality. Ormonde, who was known to be the political adherent of the house of Lancaster, was treated with kindness; and Desmond, whose overgrown power was maintained by a barbarous independence, yielded to the attractions of his manner and address. He had a son born in Dublin, afterwards the unfortunate George, duke of Clarence, to whom these rival barons were invited to stand sponsors, an honour correctly appreciated by the courtly experience of Ormonde, but which excited the pride of the ruder Desmond, whose inexperience attached to the selection a high dignity and notions of exalted trust and honour. Historians seem to imply, that the effect of this excitement led to increased insolence and oppression in the south. Cox, whose chronology is a little confused on the point, mentions a petition from the inhabitants of Cork, complaining of

* Cox.

grievances, which he attributes mainly to the tyranny of Desmond. He gives this petition at length,* observing, that historians assign a later period, but infers from its direction to the earl of Rutland and Cork, that it must have been at the present. The petitioners complain of the absence of the great proprietors, of the mischiefs accruing from their private wars, and of the want of protection from the robberies of the surrounding natives. They entreat for inquiry—for leaders—and offer to rise against their enemies, if properly countenanced and assisted. Cox connects this petition with certain laws enacted in the first parliament held by the duke, of which he specifies the provisions; but we cannot perceive the application, as, however usefully conceived, they are quite inadequate, and without any specific direction to the causes of complaint.† One provision is mentioned, the general operation of which, might go to remedy the evil: by this the land was charged with the furnishing and maintenance of its proportion of military force for the defence of the pale. A clause, also, forbidding the maintenance of retainers to an extent that required to be supported by exaction, must also, in its operation, have materially contributed to lessen the evil.‡

One occurrence in this parliament is more strictly within the scope of this notice. Notwithstanding the absence of all present factious motives in his favour, by which an interested display of respect might be elicited in favour of Ormonde, an address of thanks was voted to the king for having supported him against the injustice and malice of his enemies. The current of party was, at the moment, running high in the opposite direction, and we cannot help regarding this incident as an extraordinary tribute to the worth and uprightness of Ormonde.

A still more remarkable proof of this respect occurred shortly after. The intrigues of the duke's faction in England appear to have hit upon a curious expedient, not altogether singular, however, in its nature, to test the state of public feeling, and rally the efforts of his friends. An Irishman named Cade, was induced to assume the name of Mortimer, and set up pretensions to the crown. Suspicion fell on the duke of York, and thus afforded him a fair pretext for appearing in person on the scene. He left Ormonde deputy, thus either manifesting his confidence, or paying an honourable deference to the public weight of his character. This selection was shortly after confirmed by the title of lord lieutenant, by the king's appointment. Ormonde's presence in England became necessary, and he appointed John Mey, the archbishop of Armagh, as his deputy,§ in the year 1451.

In the following year, he may be obscurely traced among the petty wars of this island. His death took place on his return from an expedition against an obscure chief of the name of O'Mulrian. He was buried in St Mary's abbey, near Dublin.||

He was remarkable for his attainments, and the knightly polish of his manners. He cultivated history, more especially in that peculiar department connected with antiquities. He endowed the college of Heralds with lands, and was prayed for at their meetings, until the

* Cox, 162. † Ib. ‡ Leland. Cox. Davis. § Cox. Leland. || Lodge.

reformation.* By his first wife, who was daughter to Gerald, the fifth earl of Kildare, he left three sons, who were in succession earls of Ormonde.

John Cade.

DIED A. D. 1450.

JOHN CADE, known in English history by the more familiar name of Jack Cade, is said to have been an Irishman. He offers an extreme instance of an occurrence, common enough in the history of every age, of an obscure person, without any natural qualification to distinguish him from the ignoble multitude, raised by accident, his own uncalculating folly, and the unprincipled artifice of party, into a short-lived notoriety, a bloody death, and an ignominious recollection in history. His story, though connected with events which we are obliged to notice, more properly belongs to English history; it is too familiar to detain us. Set up by the Yorkists to gauge the current of party feeling, the mock representative of royal claims, he was exposed to the deadly animosity of the opposite party, without any protection from his own. His story is so far instructive, as it exhibits an instance of the facility with which notoriety can be gained, and mischief done, under the pretence of reform of abuses and the redress of public grievances.

Under the name of Mortimer, this ancient reformer withdrew into Kent, and collected together multitudes under the pretence of redressing public grievances, and easing the people of their burthens. The king sent to inquire into the cause of the tumultuary proceedings of the people; and two petitions were presently sent to the parliament, which show clearly how little reasonable cause of complaint existed in that period. The result was the levy of fifteen thousand men, which the king himself led against the rebels. Cade retreated in seeming alarm, but waited in ambush at a wood near Sevenoak, under the hope that Henry would fall into the snare. The king, quite content with the glory of "having found no foe to fight withal," turned back to London, and sent a detachment commanded by Sir Humphrey Stafford, in pursuit of Cade. This force fell into the ambush, and was, with its leader, cut off to a man.

Cade, elated by his success, marched towards London; and was joined by a multitude on the way. London opened her gates, and Cade entered in triumph. He repaid the complaisance of the citizens by giving orders against the outrages which were to be apprehended from the ragged regiments at his command. Hearing that lord Say was in town, he ordered him to be seized and beheaded. To quiet the fears of the Londoners, he removed to a post without the city, on the Surrey side of the Thames, from which he regularly entered every morning. But some of his rabble having committed disorders in the city, the citizens availed themselves of the excuse, and one morning Cade found himself shut out. A violent battle ensued, which lasted

* Lodge.
2 c

all night without decided advantage on either side—a truce till morning was agreed on. But the archbishops of Canterbury and York, who had taken refuge in the town, having obtained intelligence that the rebels were beginning to show signs of wavering and of being wearied with the adventure, drew up and published a general pardon, by proclamation, in Southwark. The effect was instantaneous on every man who heard it: he dropped his arms, and to be relieved from the fears which were beginning to seize upon them, betook away, and when morning came, he infortunate Cade found himself none. He fled into Sussex—a reward of a thousand marks was set upon his head—he wandered into Kent, and was found by a gentleman of that county, sitting in his garden. This gentleman's name was Alexander Iden. Shakespeare has seized upon the incident, and as he has always done with historical incidents, altered as closely as possible to the facts. Iden, in mentioning the unknown trespasser, soon ascertained his name and character. It is probable that Cade was not aware of the reward, and that he freely revealed his name, and urged his claim to commiseration and relief. Iden's country was, however, better informed. He drew Cade, and brought his body to London, where his head was exhibited on London bridge.

He was called Captain Mendi-all by the mob. So far as any general moral can be attached to the incident of a name expressive of feelings and objects, it seems to convey the common impulse of the uninformed crowd of all times, to imagine that all the evils to which their lot is liable, can be remedied by the instrumentality of brute violence; and to place their implicit reliance on any one who will appeal to their own prejudices, assert wrongs, and promise redress. Such promises, and such persons, will ever have weight, until the people shall arrive at sufficient intelligence fully to comprehend a very superficial truth: that the numerical strength of a country, though, so far as God permits, it can pull down and destroy, it can build up nothing; it can cast down rights, but it can secure none for itself. The evils of which the multitude mostly complain, are seldom those under which they suffer; and will ever arise in aggravated forms from the remedies they would adopt. The peasant who simply imagines, that, by the result of some violent change, he will convert the little precarious tenure of his few rods into an absolute possession, is wholly ignorant of the objects and powers of his leaders, and the real character of popular factions, the infallible produce of which is despotism. Before the golden dream of his much abused simplicity can be realized by any possible turn of human affairs, the inequalities of human intellect and ambition must cease. There must be no craft, no falsehood, no triply woven web of ambition, perfidy, and specious pretension. The power of fraud and eloquence, the illusion of prejudices, the inordinate desires that wait on ignorance, the profound ignorance and simplicity of the mercenary surface of society, must all come to an end; and then the wishes and desires of the people, becoming limited to their real condition, will cease to betray them into the sacrifice of the comforts they might have, if they did not fling them away in looking for unattainable objects.

James, Fifth Earl of Ormonde.

BORN A. D. 1420—BEHEADED A. D. 1461.

THIS nobleman succeeded in 1451 to his father's title, estates, and political connexions. In 1449 he was created earl of Wiltshire. In 1450 he was one of the commissioners for the custody of Calais. In 1453 he was appointed lord lieutenant of Ireland for ten years. He seems to have been very distinguished for his activity and the confidence of the king. He was joined with the earl of Salisbury and other noblemen to guard the seas, receiving the tonnage and poundage to defray their expense. In 1455 he was appointed lord high treasurer of England. He was present at the battle of St Albans, and when the Yorkists gained the day, escaped by divesting himself of his armour; but king Henry recovering his authority, he was reinstated in office. He was, in 1456, made keeper of the royal forest of Pederton, in Somersetshire; and of Cranbourn chace, in Wilts and Dorset. He fitted out five ships against the earl of Warwick. At the battle of Wakefield, in December, 1460, when the duke of York was slain, this earl of Ormonde commanded one wing of the royal army. In the next year, however, he was taken in a bloody battle fought at Towton, in Yorkshire, and, with many others of the English nobility, beheaded by order of Edward IV.*

O'Conor, Chief of Offaly.

DIED A. D. 1465.

OF this person, the descendant of a line of princes, we obtain one of those casual glimpses which, for the most part, is all that can be attained of those whose names have not found a place in the history of the English pale.

He had accompanied his father, in 1451, in a predatory incursion into Kildare. Their party was surprised and scattered by an English company under the command of a knight named Fitz-Eustace. His father being thrown, his horse escaped, and he was in imminent danger of being taken by his pursuers, who were fast approaching. O'Conor, with a generous contempt of danger, dismounted and offered his own horse, which the father, with a disinterestedness worthy of such a son, refused to accept: the son persisted to press, and the father to refuse, and neither would be saved at the cost of the other. At last the escape of the father became impossible; and his stern command was obeyed when obedience itself had become a dangerous duty. By an exertion of great steadiness and activity the son escaped. His father was released when it appeared that the incursion was *bona fide* in pursuit of prey.

* Lodge.

Once more the same O'Connor appears about ten years after, exhibiting the same generosity of character. In the government of Thomas, eighth earl of Desmond, this nobleman received a defeat from a powerful combination of the septs of Meath. The Irish had a prejudice in favour of Desmond, whose title and family had acquired nationality in their eyes. O'Connor, who was among the principal leaders of the Irish, saw and availed himself of the feeling. He recollected the mercy by which his own father had been released; and being also connected by gossipry, or some such old Irish tie, with Desmond, he interposed to obtain his freedom. Calling him by the title of brother, he took possession of him, and led him away with many of his followers, to a safe distance from his captors, where he set them all at liberty.*

Thomas, Eighth Earl of Desmond.

BEHEADED A. D. 1467.

THIS nobleman, the same mentioned in our last notice, was appointed lord deputy to the duke of Clarence, in 1463. His character appears to have a considerable resemblance to that of his father—encroaching, ambitious, and fond of the savage and semi-barbarous independence to which he had been trained. After the death of James, earl of Ormonde, an act was passed by the triumphant Yorkists for the attainder of many of his family. His brother escaped to Ireland with many followers; who, being proscribed in England, hoped to find refuge under his protection in Ireland. He soon collected a formidable force, and levied war against the deputy, Sir Rowland Fitz-Eustace. The earl of Desmond collected twenty thousand men, and after some checks, attributable to his want of military skill, came to an engagement, in which he gave them a defeat which completely scattered and subdued them.

In consequence of this great service, Desmond was appointed deputy. His success in the field, and the elevation which followed, were too much for his weak and proud mind. Attributing all to his own valour, spirit, and greatness, his indiscretion was inflamed to a rash confidence, which was increased by flattery. His large territories swarmed forth a crowd of enthusiastic Irish, who, considering him as their countryman, were themselves elated with the pride of his glory and power, and fed his eyes and ears with daily admiration. But his conduct was not the less subject to the scrutiny of rivals, who, while jealous of his favour, were resentful of a success of which they felt his character to be undeserving. This is indeed the most bitter sting of jealousy: men seldom admit a sentiment of envy, when they admit answerable merit.

It was immediately after that he received the deep mortification of a defeat, of which the result has been related in the notice last before this. In addition to the defeat, he had the mortification to be obliged

* Leland.

to compromise matters with O'Brien, the southern chief, by allowing him to retain his conquests, and a pension of 60 marks from the city of Limerick. He now became the object of loud accusation, and his enemies began to shake his power on every side. His rash wars and disgraceful treaties, his Irish friendships and connexions, his oppressions, and the intolerable insolence of his pretensions, were registered against him in malice. He, by his conduct, added weight to the machinations of his enemies; and at last, by a rash quarrel with the bishop of Meath, he made a powerful enemy, who collected the complaints of his enemies, and carried them to the English court.

Desmond's great popularity was, however, sufficient as yet to sustain his imprudence. He held a parliament in Wexford which passed an address to the king, in which his successes were magnified, and his failures and follies suppressed. With this he went to England, and was received favourably by king Edward. His enemies were obliged to treasure their malice for a season, and he returned in high favour to his government.

His conduct on his return was in some respects more cautious. He was more studious of the English interests, and made many regulations favourable to them.

But matters were working for his ruin. Holinshed notices a tradition, that when in England he had, with his characteristic incaution, expressed some remarks reflecting on the family of the lady Elizabeth Gray, in a conversation with the king, who was at the time bent on making her his queen. This the king afterwards told her, and Desmond was never forgiven. In aggravation of this offence, he was in the habit of sneering when she was spoken of in company, and frequently called her a "taylor's wife." Her pride and her fears were equally excited. Her marriage with the king was an object of discontent to the English nobility; and she exerted herself with industrious malice for the ruin of one whose indiscretion had nigh been fatal to her ambition, and might yet injure her family. The occasion soon presented itself. Her father was to be raised to sudden honours; and having been made earl of Rivers, was to be further promoted by the high office of lord constable. The earl of Worcester held the office, but willingly resigned it, and was in recompense appointed lord deputy in Ireland. It is thought that in coming over, Worcester was privately pledged to the adoption of the queen's resentment; and the supposition is affirmed by his conduct.

His appointment excited Desmond's resentment, and we may infer that it was rash and outrageous. It was alleged that he intended to set up for the independent sovereignty of Ireland. Many of the new deputy's acts were in themselves calculated to excite his anger, and shock his pride. Among others, his treaties were cancelled, his friends prosecuted, and his enemies supported. The parliament was adjourned to Drogheda, where it might be unbiassed by the influence of his supporters, and an act of attainder was passed against him.

Habitual impunity, and the confidence acquired by long continued command, made Desmond bold. He could not conceive himself to be in danger. His immediate step was one of singular daring: he at once, without any reflection on the subject, repaired to the earl of

Worcester to justify himself: he was seized without delay, and instantly beheaded.

John, Sixth Earl of Ormonde.

DIED A. D. 1478.

THIS earl was attainted for his faithful adherence to the Lancastrian monarch. Edward IV., however, restored him in blood. He is memorable as the most finished gentleman of his day. Edward IV., himself eminent for manners and accomplishments beyond the rudeness of his age, said of him, "that he was the goodliest knight he ever beheld, and the finest gentleman in Christendom; and that if good-breeding, good-nature, and liberal qualities were lost in the world, they might all be found in John, earl of Ormond."* He was master of most living languages of Europe, and had been employed by Edward IV. as his ambassador to every court.

He did not marry. He made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where he died, 1478.

Sir Mlick de Burgh.

DIED A. D. 1429.

THIS person was eminent for his great power, and for his activity and success in arms against the Irish septs. As it is our design to contract this portion of our history, we shall only say of his exploits, that they were as distinguished as those of most others who took part in the confused and petty warfare of which we have already had to detail so much; and as little worthy of historical detail. He married a daughter of the famous earl of Warwick, and died in 1429.

Thomas, Seventh Earl of Kildare.

DIED A. D. 1478.

WE have already had occasion to advert to the chief political events of this nobleman's life under our notices of his illustrious contemporaries. He was, in 1460, deputy to the unfortunate duke of York. In 1463, he was lord chancellor. In 1467, he was attainted, with the earl of Desmond, and Edward Plunket; but had the good sense to escape from the bloody fate of the former of these eminent persons. On this occasion, while the rash confidence of the earl of Desmond, betrayed him into the hands of the lord deputy, who ordered off his head without hearing the representations to which he trusted, Kildare made his escape, and, appealing to the justice of Edward IV., was not

* Lodge.

only restored, but on the recall of the earl of Worcester, was made deputy in his room.

Into his administration we need not specially enter. By his advancement, the Geraldine faction were restored to their ascendancy and the interests of the great rival house of Butler suffered a temporary depression. Kildare's opponents were put down with a high hand, and his dependents and connexions promoted. Faction was acquiring at that time a destructive energy and organization, which we shall hereafter have occasion to notice more expressly.

So high was the power of this great earl, that the restoration of Henry VI. did not shake him in his seat. It was at this time that he first set on foot a remarkable scheme of combination for the defence of the English. It was improved afterwards in 1474, when an association of thirteen lords and gentlemen was authorized by parliament, under the denomination of "The Fraternity of St George." Of these the earl of Kildare was the principal; they were to meet on St George's day every year, to express their loyalty and adherence to the English government. Their captain was to be annually chosen on this anniversary meeting: he was to command a force of two hundred men, one hundred and twenty mounted archers, and forty men at arms likewise mounted, with an attendant to each. For the maintenance of this force, they were empowered to levy twelve pence in the pound upon all merchandise sold in Ireland except hides, and the goods of freemen in Dublin and Drogheda. They were also empowered to make laws for their own regulation and government; and had authority for the apprehension of outlaws, rebels, &c.*

Meanwhile the earl of Ormonde, the political opponent of Kildare, was by the admirable prudence of his deportment, and the winning address of his manner and conversation, advancing into favour in the court of Edward; and under the protection and countenance of this accomplished nobleman, his numerous connexions and dependents were labouring to undermine Kildare. Their efforts were at last successful, and an enemy appointed in his place. He shortly after died, in 1478, and was buried in All Saints, near Dublin.†

Sir Christopher Plunket.

DIED A. D. 1445.

THIS person was distinguished in the warfare of his time, under Henry VI. and Edward IV. Having been sheriff of Meath, he is said to have hurt his fortune by services which surpassed his means. This appears by a grant of 20 marks from Henry VI., dated 1426. In 1432, he was appointed deputy to Sir Thomas Stanley: Camden asserts to the duke of York. The real foundation of his fortune was a marriage with the daughter of Sir Lucas Cusack, lord of Killeen, Dunsany, &c., in the county of Meath. In consequence he became lord Killeen. He founded a church at Killeen, with four priests to pray

* Stat. 14 Edward IV. Leland.

† Lodge.

for the souls of himself and his wife. He died in 1445, his eldest son succeeding to the title of Killeen, and his second, it is probable, to that of Dunsany. Camden mentions that the title of baron of Dunsany was conferred on Sir Christopher Plunket, the issue of the second son of the person here mentioned. From this statement it seems therefore probable that the elder Sir Christopher dying, left these two lordships with their appurtenances, to his two elder sons, one to each, thus founding the two families of Fingal and Dunsany. The fact derives interest from the position of the demesnes of their modern representatives, which, from a little distance, appear to be one; the two castles being the principal objects of the prospect, on the side of the same hill, in the county of Meath.

Sir Christopher, lord of Killeen and Dunsany, died in 1445, and was buried in the church of Killeen.*

Gerald, Eighth Earl of Kildare.

DIED A. D. 1513.

THE eighth earl of Kildare may be considered as the most eminent Irishman during his long life, the events of which period may therefore be most conveniently, and with the least prolixity or confusion, brought together in our notice of him.

His mother was Joan, daughter to the seventh earl of Desmond. His elder sister married Henry MacOwen O'Neile; by which he was closely connected through life with the family of O'Neile, and was uncle to Con O'Neile, who married his daughter. He succeeded his father in 1478, and was appointed lord deputy to the duke of York. The king, however, was led to recall this appointment, by his prejudice against the barons of the Irish pale. There was unquestionably some ground for the suspicion that these noblemen, continually involved in factions, enmities, and alliances, could scarcely govern with the impartial temper necessary for the restoration of order and tranquillity; and the connexions of the Geraldine lords were more peculiarly obnoxious to such suspicion. The O'Neiles, who were in this generation identified with the Geraldines of Kildare, had for some generations been among the proudest and most untractable of the native chiefs. The earl was dismissed and lord Grey was sent over in his place. This hasty act roused the pride, resentment, and fear of the Irish barons. They were bent on resistance: some informality in lord Grey's commission seems to have afforded the excuse. Kildare denied the authenticity of the king's letter of dismissal, which was only signed with the privy seal; and a lamentable contest, in the highest degree adapted to bring the English government into disgrace, now followed. The two rival governors proceeded to hold their parliaments; and that held by Grey annulled the acts of that by the earl of Kildare. The Irish barons, as well as the officers of state, sided with Kildare. On the death of the duke of Clarence, which vacated

* Lodge.

Grey's appointment, they took advantage of the circumstance to elect Kildare, according to an ancient law of Henry II., confirmed by a statute of Richard II. Grey's parliament still resisted, and the confusion arose to such a height that it was thought necessary by the king to summon Kildare and other principal persons, to give an account of the nature and causes of such perplexed and disorderly proceedings. Grey resigned; and king Edward, who, probably by this time, had learned the necessity of a more powerful agency than he could afford to employ in the administration of Irish affairs, affected to be satisfied with the representations of the Geraldine faction, and reinstated Kildare. He came back armed with ample powers, and liberal allowances, and superseded lord Gormanston, who had been appointed in the interim. He held a parliament on his return, in which Con O'Neile, his son-in-law, was naturalized.

The government of Kildare was such as to support his pretensions and serve the English; his ability and active vigour soon appeared: he preserved peace and order more by his extensive family power and influence, than by the small force he was allowed by the court of England, and more probably by his favour with the Irish than either. The heads of the Geraldine race had long been regarded by the natives as their own chiefs, and had thus, in a measure, become naturalized among the septs. He defended the pale with unusual vigour, and, at the same time, entered with spirit and interest into the affairs of the natives, and continued with uninterrupted prosperity through the remainder of Edward's reign, and that of his successor.

Edward IV. died in 1483 (April). Richard III. had too much to attend to, to think of Irish affairs, so that no alteration was thought of. The parliaments held by Kildare were subservient to his influence, and he was enabled to act with great promptness and success in all he undertook. One parliament in Dublin gave him a subsidy of thirteen shillings and fourpence on every plowland for the expenses of his military proceedings.*

The accession of Henry VII. was not received with popular favour among the Geraldine faction, who had always been the warm adherents of the rival branch of York. There was, therefore, felt a very general sensation of surprise at the continuance of Kildare, and other Yorkist lords in office. It is highly probable that Henry was, by his residence abroad during his exile, prevented from entering to the full extent into the remoter ramifications of faction. However this may be, there is reason enough to agree with many writers on the period, who censure his neglect. He left an ample field unguarded in the hands of his numerous enemies, for the shelter and promotion of their secret intrigues. Kildare's party seemed elated by an oversight which they attributed to their own importance and power, and were suffered to go to remarkable lengths of excess and daring, until they were betrayed by indulgence, and tempted by their factious predilections, into a course, which seriously risked the prosperity of this eminent nobleman.

The conduct of Henry VII. was impolitic, and little adapted to sink

* Cox.

past enmity into oblivion: he was mean, cold, avaricious, and uncunctious, without the enlarged foresight that might, either by policy or kindness, have suppressed the power, or soothed the prejudices of his enemies. He allowed himself to be influenced by his own factious feelings: without disarming, he evinced hostility and disfavour to the Yorkists. But the effects of these unpopular dispositions were fermented into a generous indignation by his cruelty to the young earl of Warwick, and still more by his unworthy conduct towards his queen—the representative of the house of York, and the hope of this party. The mother of this slighted wife and insulted daughter of Edward IV., a princess celebrated for her active spirit and her talent for intrigue, had been materially influential in the course of events which placed Henry on the throne. She now bent all her faculties and animosity towards revenge.

The wary and apprehensive suspicion of Henry was excited by the numerous indications of such a state of things; his friends and his creatures were alert, and a plot was soon suspected on reasonable grounds, though its definite intentions and agents were yet mysterious. His attention was directed to Ireland; he recollected, or was reminded that it had ever been the ready refuge of the enemies and opponents of his house, and that Kildare had been a zealous partisan and servant of the house of York. He was indeed surrounded by the enemies of Kildare. It was in the second year of his reign that, under the influence of these suggestions, he summoned Kildare to court on the pretext of desiring to consult with him on the state of Ireland. The earl was too well aware of his real objects, to be willing to obey the summons; he had justly appreciated the cold craft of Henry—he also felt that his ear and countenance were possessed by his own bitter enemies, and resolved not to put himself in their power. He convened the Irish barons, and obtained an address to the king, representing the danger of his leaving the country, until certain precautionary measures should be adopted. On the strength of this, Kildare deferred his departure, and the king pretended to be satisfied.

The history of Lambert Simnel is generally known to every one: a wicked and mischievous farce, of which the most remarkable scenes were acted in Ireland. Every reader of English history is aware of the blundering plot, in which this poor youth was made to personate the young earl of Warwick, whose person was widely known and in the actual custody of the king. To avoid the many embarrassing consequences of so absurd a pretension, it was thought advisable that he should first appear in Ireland, where any suspicion on the score of identity was less likely to be raised, and where the faction, which was numerous and enthusiastic, might gather to a head without observation.

Simnel arrived in Dublin, was received with enthusiasm, crowned with a diadem taken from a statue of the virgin, in Christ church, where a sermon was preached by the bishop of Meath; the ceremony was attended by the lord deputy, the chancellor, treasurer, and other state officers. From church he was carried in state, after the ancient Irish fashion, on the shoulders of "Great Darcy of Platten," and held his court in Dublin, in all the state and authority of a king. The

credulity of the people was satisfied, and the royal imposture was hailed with a general overflow of enthusiastic loyalty: at the same time, it is not likely that many beyond the lowest rabble were deceived; there can be no doubt that Kildare and his party looked upon Simnel merely as the instrument of their own resentment, ambition, and factious feeling; to be used for the depression of Henry's cause, and the promotion of that of the claimants of the rival house. There seemed to be two obvious courses; one to decoy Henry into Ireland—the other, to march an army into England. By the first, the Yorkists would be enabled to make head, and to pursue their operations with less interruption in that country: the second assumed the extensive existence of a conspiracy in England, and the immediate co-operation of a preponderating force. Looking on either alternative, the plan appears to us to be little short of insanity. This, however, may be said of the whole history of such insurrections; to the retrospect of history, they seem to be the result of an infatuation that is always hard to account for, until it is remembered how little experience has to do with the political movements of faction, and how rashly passion and ambition overlook difficulties and exaggerate advantages.

The English adherents of Simnel, who were strangers in the country, were in favour of making Ireland the scene of the struggle; but the Irish barons were aware of the fallacy of their assumptions. The pale was at the time contracted to a few miles of territory; beyond its boundaries, any support they might expect to find, was not likely to be either sincere or effectual. To this is to be added the difficulty of maintaining their force in an impoverished country, and we should also infer the reluctance of the Irish people to have their own lands and homes the scene first of military exaction, and then, should matters take an unfavourable turn, of military execution and the total revolution of power and property which might be effected on the spot by an enraged victor.

A little before, the rebels had received a large accession of force by the exertions of the duchess of Burgundy, who sent over two thousand Germans, under the command of Martin Swart, an experienced leader. With these the earl of Lincoln, and the lord Lovel, with many English gentlemen and followers, had come over to Ireland to swell their confidence, and add to their distressing expenditure.

With this force, it was resolved to pass over into England, and throw themselves on the popularity of their cause. This was undoubtedly increased; but the king had, in the mean time, exercised that prudence and precaution, which were so much wanting amongst his adversaries. He deprived disaffection of its flimsy pretext, by the open exhibition of the true earl of Warwick; and made his levies with promptitude, carefully selecting the flower of the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, which were favourable to the earl of Broughton and other rebel lords. Kildare remained in Ireland to attend to the government; but his brothers, lord Thomas and lord Maurice, of whom the former was chancellor, and resigned his seals for the purpose, accompanied the expedition. It was placed under the command of lord Lincoln, and landed at Furness some time about the end of May, 1487. They were joined on their landing by Sir Thomas Broughton,

and marched through Yorkshire to Newark,* in the sanguine hope of being joined by the people in their progress. In this they were sadly disappointed. The king's precautions had been such as to conciliate popular good-will; and there was a general prejudice against a king, however legitimate, who was thus brought in as an invader by the force of Dutch and Irish. Consequently their course was looked on by the people with cold and silent curiosity, and every one shrunk back from their advances. The country through which they had thus inconsiderately marched, had but recently been instructed by the dispersion of a rebel party, and quieted by the presence of the king. The rebels were sadly discouraged by this reception, but it was no time to turn, and they pursued their way toward Newark. It was now their hope to surprise this place. King Henry advanced to meet them at the head of a strong and well appointed force. On the 16th of June, the van of his army, led by the earl of Oxford, came up with the rebels near the village of Stoke. He also procured from the pope a bull of excommunication to be pronounced at will against the rebels. On the 11th of June both armies met, near the village of Stoke, and a battle was fought in which both sides exerted themselves with the utmost bravery and perseverance. The Irish troops, however, were sadly degenerated from the training of their fathers, whose arms and discipline gave a uniformity to the victorious progress of Strongbow and his companions; they had fallen into the habits of the native septs, and now came like them, naked of defensive armour, and chiefly armed with swords and light javelins, or bows of the Irish construction, which were nearly useless against any but a half-naked antagonist. The Germans were the main force of the rebel army, and, for a long time, kept the victory doubtful; the Irish fought with desperate fury, but when by degrees their steadier allies were cut to pieces, they were obliged to give way, and after a murderous conflict, which lasted for three hours, were routed with tremendous slaughter. The Germans, with their brave leader were all slain. The lords Fitz-Gerald, with other Irish leaders, were also the victims of their infatuation, and left their bodies on this bloody field. More than half of the whole body of the rebels were slain, and the loss of the English was very great. Sir Thomas Broughton was also slain, and the lord Lovel was never after heard of. Some of the old historians relate a strange romance, of which, taking all the circumstances, the probability is sufficient. The lord Lovel had been seen escaping from off the field; the slain had also been examined—no pains were of course neglected to find him; his life was forfeited, and it was little consistent with the fears or vigilant activity of Henry to leave any spot unsearched; but all search was vain, he was nowhere to be found. It might be expected that his lady might have some tidings from his retreat, and his people and friends must, sooner or later, have begun to look for some account: but neither enmity nor love had the fortune to penetrate the mystery of his concealment: the time came when the jealousy of the king must have gone to sleep, and his appearance might have been ventured, but the generation passed away, and lord Lovel was seen no more. In two

* Cox.

hundred years after, some labourers employed at Minster Lovel, in Yorkshire, the mansion of this ancient lord, discovered a chamber under ground, which had, perhaps, been contrived for concealment. There they found, seated on a chair, and leaning over a table, by which it was supported, the skeleton of a man, which was supposed to be that of the rebel lord.*

The remainder of this rebellion was soon disposed of. Simnel was taken and allowed to live and reflect disgrace on his adherents, in the capacity of a scullion in Henry's kitchen; from which he was afterwards raised to the post of falconer.

Henry sent letters expressive of his thanks to the citizens of Waterford, who had adhered to his cause. The archbishops of Cashel and Tuam, and other prelates who had kept aloof from rebellion, were commissioned to pronounce ecclesiastical censures upon the archbishop of Armagh and other prelates who had taken part with the rebels and their puppet king. The Irish barons became sensible of their folly, and were looking with reasonable apprehension to the consequences: but Henry had still a delicate course to pursue: he had perceived the consequences of his unpopular conduct, and now desired to conciliate popular opinion, and to reconcile the affections he had alienated. He had not the means to settle Ireland by a thorough conquest, or even to keep up a force sufficient for its preservation, and had the sagacity to perceive, that if it was to be preserved, it must be by means of the power existing among the great Irish barons themselves. In such a juncture, Kildare alone possessed the power and influence necessary for the support of his authority, and it would be necessary altogether to root out the Geraldine interests by a destructive war, or by conciliation to avail himself of their authority. The house of Butler was, at the time, in no condition to support him; Desmond would probably side with his Geraldine kindred.

The views of the king were seconded by the circumstances in which Kildare was placed. This great nobleman was, of course, not wanting to himself; he pursued the politic course of frank avowals, and promises of submission; he was answered with an assurance that the king's favour should depend upon his future conduct. He was continued in the government, and instructed to support the king's authority, and maintain the tranquillity of the pale. Although this concession strongly indicates the great power of Kildare, he was not yet clear of the consequences of the king's jealousy, or of the invidious hostility of individuals, to which his recent conduct had in some measure exposed him. The king was not content to leave it to be understood that his interests were left unprotected by himself; it quickly occurred to a mind so cautious and wary, that the ambition of Kildare would be strongly tempted by the notion that the king was at his mercy in Ireland. Under these or such impressions, he sent over Sir Richard Edgecumbe, for the ostensible purpose of receiving submissions and giving pardons, but he sent him with a force of five hundred men, to make his presence respected, and impress a salutary awe. The effect of this measure was different on different persons. Edgecumbe re-

* Carte. Bacon.

ceived the submissions of many at Kinsale, and then sailed to Waterford, where he complimented the citizens on their fidelity. Lastly, he sailed for Dublin, where, arriving on the 5th of July, he was received, with all humility, by the mayor and citizens. Kildare was absent on some expedition. On the 12th he arrived, and sent the lord Slane and the bishop of Meath to Edgecumbe, to invite him to a conference at St Thomas' court, where he himself was lodging. Edgecumbe repaired to the place, armed with haughtiness, and wrapped in diplomatic sternness, probably expecting to find in Kildare the same ready submission which he had hitherto found in others. But Kildare knew too well the secret of his own greatness to lower his high pretensions so far; he met the cold reserve of Edgecumbe with a courtesy as cold. He heard his representations and overtures—discussed them freely—and consented to give the assurance of homage, fealty, and oaths of fidelity; but refused to yield to certain further proposals, of which the import has not transpired.* The parties separated without coming to an agreement: but met again and renewed the discussion. Kildare persisted in withholding his concurrence to any terms beyond those offered by himself; and the commissioner found it expedient to acquiesce.

The consent of Kildare being thus obtained, he was joined in the oaths of allegiance and fidelity, by the lords Portlester, Trimleston, Dunsany, &c.,† who were absolved from the ecclesiastical censures which had been pronounced upon them. This absolution was proclaimed on the following Sunday, in a sermon preached by Payne bishop of Meath.‡ This seems curious, as Payne is mentioned among the bishops thus absolved: Ware enumerates by the bishops of Dublin, Meath, and Kildare, who lay under the same censures, and were similarly pledged and absolved. On this occasion, the full reconciliation and pardon of Henry was signified to Kildare by a golden chain; and, a few days after, Kildare delivered a written certificate, under his seal, declaring his promise of future fidelity.

Kildare was continued in the government, a measure, marked by the cool and unimpassioned prudence of the king's character. The most common allowance for the earl's regard to his own interest, as well as the solemnity of the pledge he had made, might be felt to ensure his fidelity for some time at least; and it could not be doubted, that his great power and authority in Ireland, marked him as the fittest person to keep down its fermenting spirit, and preserve the allegiance of its proud and irritable, as well as restless and turbulent barons. The result was all that could reasonably be hoped for: Kildare exerted himself with vigour and efficient success; he invaded M'Geohegan's country, and reduced its principal fortress, and wasted the territory of Moy-Cashel.§ Lodge mentions that at this time he received from Germany six musquets, a rarity at the time, with which his guard were armed when they stood sentry before his residence in Thomas' court.

His enemies were, meantime, on the alert. The archbishop of Armagh strongly represented the danger of allowing a subject so powerful and ambitious to rule all things at will, and offered to counterbalance his authority by accepting the troublesome office of chancellor.

* Leland.

† Ware.

‡ Ware.

§ Lodge.

His representations were met by counter statements on the part of Kildare, who was not remiss in his own defence. For this purpose he sent over Payne, the bishop of Meath, as his emissary to the court. Henry was not one to act on the suggestion of such representations. He was yet so far influenced by the speciousness of the allegations on either side, that he summoned over Kildare, with the principal lords of either faction, that he might be the better enabled to judge from a more near observation of their dispositions and representations, as well as to confirm the good and deter the evil designs which he might thus ascertain. The result was favourable to Kildare. The calculating disposition of Henry is curiously illustrated by the strong practical reproof of their late disaffection, which he contrived upon this occasion. He received them at Greenwich, and having expostulated with them in a kind and condescending tone on their recent ill conduct, he invited them to a banquet, at which they assembled, many of them triumphing in their easy restoration to honour and royal favour. Their exultation was probably damped by the appearance of one of the attendants by whom they were surrounded: this was no other than Lambert Simnel himself, the puppet to whom they had bowed their necks but a few days before. The sensation of mortification was, it may be conceived, strongly felt; fear, too, notwithstanding the recent act of grace, insinuated itself, as they looked with uneasy glances at the confidant of so much disloyalty and so much secret intrigue. But their fears were vain: the king had not stooped to extract the guilty *minutiae* of indiscretion, from a source which his pride, as well as policy, had affected to despise. A more judicious policy followed this seasonable humiliation with kindness and royal munificence.

The earl returned to his government with renewed lustre, and armed with plenary authority. The whispers of faction had been silenced, the more violent demonstrations of invidious feeling repressed by his success, the most powerful barons were his personal adherents and friends; his own force was sufficient, also, to meet hostile movements, which were uniformly partial in their extent and purposes. And it was still more favourable to his government, that few of the Irish chiefs were sufficiently disengaged from their own contentions, to be at leisure to pay much attention to the events of the settlement. His kinsman, Desmond, in the south, and O'Neill in the north, were active in their several spheres to keep up the distractions of those whose quiet might be dangerous to the slowly recovering prosperity of the pale.

In this state of things, another adventurer appeared on the scene. The rivals of king Henry's claim were far from acquiescing in the general consent of the kingdom. A repetition of the same manœuvre which we have detailed, was soon contrived and repeated with greater caution. The name of Richard, duke of York, was again assumed by a youth of the name of Warbeck, who was sent out of the way, into Portugal, until the favourable moment for his appearance should occur. In such a conjuncture, King Henry, did not think it advisable to risk the renewal of the former dangerous plot, by the continuance of the same actors on the scene of public affairs in Ireland: Kildare was displaced, and the duke of Bedford appointed—the archbishop of Dublin being selected as his deputy. The consequence was, for the time, of

serious disadvantage to Kildare, and to all the lords of his family and faction. It would occupy far more space than the scale of this work admits of, to detail, with any minuteness, the circumstances of the many changes of reverse and prosperity in the busy and eventful life of this eminent nobleman, by far the most remarkable Irishman of his time. This interval of disfavour, though not of long continuance, had the effect of depressing many of his friends, and restoring many of his enemies to a position in which they could again be troublesome. Of these none require to be specially noticed but the Ormonde family, who, having now been for a long time in a condition of adversity, were beginning again to lift up their heads in the sunshine of court favour, and to regain their ascendancy in Ireland. The parliament assembled by the new deputy, was mainly composed of enemies to Kildare: their chief object seems to have been the mortification of himself, and the depression of his party. All these were called to the severest account for proceedings long past, the delinquencies of whole lives were ripped up, and the arrangements of a long season of power and influence were reversed.

The landing of Warbeck soon followed, but was not in the same degree eventful as the former attempt of a similar nature. Much disaffection was excited, and many animosities inflamed; but the inhabitants of the pale had not yet quite forgotten the lesson of caution they had so recently received, and if they had, their condition was, at the time, unfavourable to insurrectionary movements. A wet summer and autumn caused a grievous dearth in the land, which was followed by a dreadful malady common at the time, known by the name of the sweating sickness; it was probably a repetition of the same pestilence which had visited this island in the year 1348, after making its ravages in most parts of Europe; and again appeared in 1361, 1370, and 1383.* Under such circumstances, no decided movement in Warbeck's favour was made; Desmond declared for him, and Kildare, it is alleged by historians, showed signs of following the same course. Fortunately for this earl, Warbeck received an invitation from the French king, who wished to use him as a means of annoyance against Henry. He departed, and pursued his adventurous and tragic fortunes; "one of the longest plays of that kind that hath been in memory, and might, perhaps, have had another end, if he had not met a king both wise, stout, and fortunate."† Having first landed in 1492, he was hanged in Tyburn, November, 1499.

Meanwhile king Henry was perplexed by the various and contradictory statements which reached him from Ireland. He at last ordered the deputy to attend him that he might communicate the full

* The pestilence of 1485 is described by Polydore Virgil, from whose description a curious account may be found in Ware's Annals.—*Ad. An.* 1491.

It is curious that Ware mentions the plague of 1491, to have followed the appearance of a "blazing star." Such was the philosophy of his day. The incident was perhaps present to Milton's imagination in his description of a comet—

"That fires the length of Ophiucus, huge
In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair
Shakes pestilence and war."

† Bacon.

detail of all the transactions during his administration. The archbishop went over, but added little to the king's information on Irish affairs. The answers of the bishop were more indicative of his virtue and simplicity, than of his political competency. The king was favourably impressed by his conversation, and treated him with distinguishing favour.

The faction of Kildare were alarmed. Kildare himself resolved to plead his own cause with the king, and without delay repaired to England. His representations were, however, at this time, unfavourably received; the king's ear was prepossessed by his enemies. Though it is probable that most of his statements came gradually to work in his favour, as after events confirmed their truth, or at least gave them a colour of probability. He was now ungraciously rebuked, and told that the charges against him were many, and required to be tried in Ireland. He was commanded to attend Sir Edward Poynings, the new deputy, to that country.

Poynings landed at Howth, about the end of September, with nearly a thousand men, and accompanied by several ecclesiastics who were appointed to fill the most important civil offices. Not long after, resolving to act with vigour, he collected all the force that could be drawn together, in which he was assisted by the earl of Kildare, and James Ormonde, the enemy of Kildare. With this force he marched into Ulster, where he ravaged the territories of the O'Hanlons and others, who were known to be disaffected to the English government. These exploits are not worth relating, as they had no result. The Irish knew better than to afford them the advantage of a direct collision of force, they allowed them to wreak a violence which could not be resisted, on the produce of the earth, and the rude dwellings of its inhabitants; but the people melted from before their march into the unexplored recesses of the forests and bogs. The most important facts, were the still increasing suspicions which, by the malice of his enemies, were thrown upon the earl of Kildare. Kildare was undoubtedly discontented, and with good reason; for he was not only deprived of station and authority, but wrongfully accused, and likely to be condemned without a fair and open hearing. He was one of the many instances of the low and corrupt state of public justice in his age: if a great man was suspected, a sort of tacit judicature of espionage and intrigue, conducted by the basest agents and with the worst motives, was set on foot; every representation, coloured by vindictive feeling, was heard by suspicion; and if the plea of the accused was heard at all, it was by singular good fortune. And yet this abuse was chiefly due to the inordinate ambition and unconstitutional power of the nobles thus persecuted: the exclusion of justice was their own. In the instance of Kildare, the wrongs under which he had suffered, were by no uncommon, or even improbable inference, made the ground of increased suspicions; it could not be believed that his loyalty was sincere, and he was accused of secretly fomenting the designs of Malachy O'Hanlon. At the same time, unfortunately many of the powerful Geraldines gave reason enough to confirm these accusations; and a brother of the earl's, by seizing the castle of Carlow, brought these suspicions to a decision.

A parliament was presently assembled, in which, among other acts, some of which we shall hereafter notice,* the earl was declared a traitor; and soon after sent to England.

He was thrown into the Tower, where he was allowed to remain nearly two years without a hearing. At length in 1496, he was allowed to plead before the king. He was accused of conspiring with, and abetting the designs of the king's enemies; of conspiring with O'Hanlon to slay the deputy; of causing the seizure of Carlow castle; of the exaction of coigne and livery and other such usual charges of the time. The scene which took place is described with much distinctness, by many writers, and if we take into computation nothing more than actually was answered against these allegations, the whole scene is inexplicable. But it is in the very highest degree likely, that the whole truth had in the meantime transpired, and the character and history of Kildare reached the king through more unsuspecting channels. And it may be not unreasonably inferred that when Kildare was brought forth to plead before the king, that the whole had been pre-arranged. His enemies were now to be confronted with him, and he was advised by the king to be provided with good counsel, "yea," said Kildare, "the ablest in the realm," at the same time seizing the king's hand with rude simplicity, "your highness I take for my counsel, against these false knaves."† His accusers were now heard at length, but the king had been made more distinctly aware of the circumstances, and was enabled to perceive the futility of most of their charges, and to infer with certainty, the fact of a most inveterate and malignant conspiracy against the earl.

Among the many accusations which had been with industrious enmity raked together for the present purpose, the greater part were so far serviceable to Kildare, as they were such as plainly exposed the motives of the accusers. They were such charges as might be brought against all the nobles of Ireland; or such as affected the interests or passions of the accusers only. None of any consequence were such as could affect the interests of the king. Kildare's manner of defence was such as to impress a conviction of his sincerity and honesty, and evidently suggested to the king, the idea that he was likely to be the truest, as well as the most efficient servant to be entrusted with his Irish interests. When he was charged with having burned the church of Cashel, he interrupted the witnesses, "you may spare your proofs," he said, "I did burn the church, for I thought the bishop was in it." Charges thus met by one who seemed to despise his accusers, and to fling on their accusations a high unconscious defiance, became ridiculous. Kildare treated his enemies as if they had been standing their trials in his own castle, and seemed as if he only thought of clearing his wounded honour before the king. The king saw that he was incapable of the craft and intrigue that had been imputed to him, and made up his mind accordingly. When the bishop of Meath

* The acts of this parliament were the first written in English; the previous Irish parliaments having had their acts written in French.—*Ware's Antiquities*.

† Leland, Cox, Ware.

ended a violent harangue, by saying, "all Ireland cannot govern that gentleman,"—"that gentleman then shall govern all Ireland," was the answer of king Henry.*

The earl was now restored to his honours, and to favour, and consulted by the king on the state of Ireland. Among the first-fruits of this reconciliation, was the pardon of Desmond, and of the Irish subjects who had favoured Warbeck. Kildare's return as deputy, was more decidedly of advantage to the king's interests, and to the subjects of the pale, than any of the late measures. For though some excellent laws had recently been made, the state of the country required expedients stronger than law which implies a state of subjection and civil order. Kildare's decision and energy of character, together with his great power, gave him an efficiency that no one else could pretend to: and he entered on his administration with a strong zeal for the king, for whose protection he was grateful.

He lost no time, on his arrival, but marched at once against O'Brien, and then marched on through Limerick, and Cork, in which latter city he placed an effectual garrison. In the north his arms were equally successful. His kinsman Con O'Niall, was friendly to the English interests, and exerted himself with ability and success, and Kildare returned to Dublin after having quieted the country by the force and terror of his arms. His prudence, generosity, and moderation, were as distinguished as his success in the field. He reconciled himself to the bitter enemies over whose hostility he had so lately triumphed. Among these the archbishop of Armagh, and Sir James Ormonde, may be distinguished. A meeting with the earl, at the desire of Sir James, in Christ church, for the purpose of explanation, led to a dangerous riot, of which we shall presently relate the particulars.

The decisive government, and the vigorous military conduct of Kildare, caused great discontent among his opponents: every effort was made to impede his activity and damp his zeal. He seemed to have but one object in view, and exerted himself with such earnest and successful care and activity, that his administration did more to bring back the prosperity of the pale, than any efforts that had been made for the two preceding centuries.

We may select a few of his principal enterprises during this administration. He marched in 1498 into Ulster, to the assistance of his nephew, Tirlogh O'Niall. Tirlogh's father Con, had been murdered by Henry his brother, who met the same fate from Tirlogh and Con, sons of Con. It seems, however, that the enemies of Tirlogh's branch were on the alert to interrupt his accession to his paternal rights. The earl was joined by O'Donnel and other native chiefs, the friends of Tirlogh, and soon set all to rights. He besieged the castle of Dungannon, and compelled Art O'Neal to submit and give hostages.†

After his return from this expedition, another to Cork took place in the October of the same year. He compelled the inhabitants both of Cork and Kinsale to swear allegiance, and bind themselves both by indenture and hostages, and left an effectual garrison in Cork.‡

* Leland, Cox, Ware, Lodge.

† Cox. Ware's Antiquities.

‡ Ibid.

Having returned and held a parliament in Dublin, he next, in the beginning of 1499, marched into Connaught, where there was much disturbance. There he took and garrisoned the castles of Athleague, Roscommon, Tusk, and Castlereagh.*

He next held a parliament at his own castle of Castledermot, in the county of Kildare, where he made several useful regulations. Amongst other measures he obtained for the king, an impost of a shilling in the pound on all wares and merchandise, except wine and oil.† An enactment is also mentioned to enforce the use of saddles among the nobility, and to compel them to wear their robes in parliament.

Another violent disturbance broke out in Ulster in the following year (1500); and the earl marched into the country with speed, and quickly reduced it to order. He took the castle of Kinard and gave it into the custody of his nephew Tirlogh O'Niall, and marching to Cork, he appeased the disaffected spirit which was beginning to show itself again, by a mixture of severity and kindness. He enlarged the privileges of the city, but he hanged the mayor.

On the 18th February, Gerald, eldest son to the earl, was appointed lord treasurer of Ireland—a fact which may serve to confirm the impression of his high favour and influence at this period of his life. This favour, while it helped to repress the hostility of his numerous enemies, added fuel to their malice, and at last the general ill-will began to grow to a head. This effect had been retarded by the circumstance that the barons were unaccustomed to act in concert, having been hitherto singly equal to maintain their own quarrels with the king's deputies and give disturbance with impunity. The great authority and active conduct of Kildare, had made it dangerous to rebel; and there was no other Irish baron or chief could venture even a demonstration of hostility. Slowly, however, the sense of a common malice went round, and a combination was formed under the leading of Ulick, lord Clanricard, a powerful noble whom Kildare had thought to secure by giving him his daughter in marriage. From this, however, grew the pretext for dissension: Ulick slighted his wife, and the earl resented his daughter's wrong.

Lord Clanricard was joined by O'Brian, O'Carrol, and many other powerful chiefs, and they levied an army which the annalists and historians describe as the largest that had been collected since the days of Strongbow. Kildare, notwithstanding the great risk of staking the fortune of his house and the stability of his government on the event of so formidable a struggle, drew together his own forces. He was joined by the lords Gormanstown, Slane, Delvin, Killeen, Dunsany, Howth, Trimleston, &c.; with these he marched into Connaught. The armies met on the 19th August, 1504, at Knocktow, near Galway. For some hours the fight was maintained with equal success and much bloodshed on both sides; at last, Clanricard's men gave way and were put to flight with enormous slaughter. The lowest statement

* Cox. Ware's Antiquities.

† Cox dissents from Ware, as to the date of this impost. But the difference is not material.

(probably the most correct) makes the loss of the defeated party 2000* men, the book of Howth states it 9000, but this Ware considers to be a mistake. Many prisoners also were taken by the English party, among whom were two sons of Clanricard. Galway and Athenry surrendered to the conqueror who laid waste the country of O'Carrol on his return.

The result of this victory was alike fortunate for the earl and beneficial to the pale, now once more beginning to show signs of revival. Kildare celebrated his triumph by giving thirty tons of wine to his soldiers. He despatched the archbishop of Dublin to carry the account to king Henry, who in recompense gave him the order of the garter.

From this, Ireland enjoyed an unusual interval of tranquillity. But in the years 1504 and 1505, this blessing was balanced by a plague of awful violence and duration. Its effects were aggravated by a famine, consequent on a wet summer and autumn.

In these and the following years, Kildare exercised his authority in peace and honour. In 1508, he held a parliament from which he obtained a subsidy for the king of 13s. 4d. from every 120 acres of arable land.†

In 1509, he was obliged to invade Ulster, but met with no resistance. The same year king Henry VII. died, and Kildare was confirmed in his government by the young king. From this his usual success attended him until his death, which happened in 1513. As he was marching against O'Carrol, he was seized with illness at Athy, the effect of a wound from a shot received some time before from the O'Mores of Leix, and died after a few days' illness, on the 3d September. His body was carried to Dublin and interred in Christ's Church, where he had built Mary's chapel the year before.

He is deservedly praised by all the historians who relate his actions, as the most efficient and useful governor that Ireland had known to the time of his death. His private ambition and party feeling were during his lengthened administration, made always subservient to the interests of the country. His ever prompt activity kept down the spirit of insurrection by timely resistance; and the stern decision of an uncompromising temper, made him an object of fear to the disaffected and of reliance to his friends.

He was thrice married. His first wife died of grief in the year 1495, while he was a prisoner in England; after which he married an English lady, the daughter of Oliver St John, in the county of Wilts. He left a numerous issue by each, and was succeeded by his eldest son Gerald.

* Ware says 2000; Cox, four; and adds, "it is prodigious that not one Englishman was hurt in this mighty battel."

† Ware's Antiquities. Cox, &c.

Sir James Ormonde.

DIED A. D. 1518.

SIR JAMES ORMONDE was the illegitimate son of John, sixth earl of Ormonde. As Thomas, the seventh earl, chiefly resided in England, Sir James, who was evidently a person of a very ambitious and enterprising temper, was at the head of the Butler faction in Ireland. His name frequently appears among the most prominent of the turbulent chiefs of his time. He was among the most violent and dangerous as indeed the most powerful of the enemies of the last noticed earl of Kildare. He was left under the protection of Thomas, the seventh earl, his father's brother, who succeeded to the earldom in 1478. He was brought up at the English court by his uncle, and grew into great favour with the king. He seems to have been intrusted with the management of the earl of Ormonde's party in Ireland, where he was soon appointed by the king to offices of trust and authority. In 1498 he is often mentioned as lord treasurer of Ireland. His persevering enmity against the earl of Kildare was shown both by numerous attacks on his friends, and also by accusations and intrigues at the English court. We have already adverted to his meeting in Dublin with the earl for the purpose of explanation: it may be mentioned here more fully, as the best marked incident of Ormonde's history, and as very characteristic of the civilization of the time in which it occurred.

The power of the earl of Kildare had reached a height which imposed on the boldest of his enemies a necessity of conciliation. Sir James Ormonde complained to the earl by letter or messenger, of the calumnies which had been spread to his prejudice, by which he was falsely represented as an enemy to the king's government, and desired a fair hearing that he might justify himself; to this the lord deputy consented, and Sir James entered Dublin at the head of a large body of armed men, and encamped in an abbey in the suburbs, named St Thomas' court. There was at the time a strong prepossession against Sir James, as an exacting and oppressive leader, and his appearance at the head of such a force raised a considerable ferment among the citizens, who feared some treacherous intent and meditated resistance. While this disposition was spreading and acquiring heat, Sir James was carrying on a communication with the lord deputy, to prevail upon him to consent to the meeting he had proposed. As his promises were fair, and the proposals specious, at least, Kildare consented, and a meeting in Patrick's church was fixed.

They met according to this appointment within the cathedral, while their retainers stood without. During their conference, which is said to have been quickly imbibed by mutual reproaches, angry words were exchanged between their parties who stood outside. From words the quarrel grew to blows. In their fury, the soldiers of Kildare conceived the notion that this factious tumult in which they were involved, was a scheme of Sir James Ormonde, either to murder the earl, or to seize on the city. Under this, or some such impression, a body of archers

forced their way into the church. Their sudden rush threw Sir James into a violent alarm; he imagined that it was a preconcerted scheme to assassinate him, and ran to the chapter house, into which he entered and secured the door. For a few minutes the confusion must have been very great: the fury of the archers appears in the description of the annalist: "The citizens in their rage imagining that every post in the church had been one of the soldiers, shot hab nab, at random, up to the rood loft, and to the chancel, leaving some of their arrows sticking in the images."* Kildare, whose intentions were free from any deceit, felt that his honour was at stake, and instantly rebuked his people: following Sir James to the chapter house door, he assured him that no harm should happen him. Ormonde desired his hand upon the promise, and a hole was made in the door for the purpose. But when this was done, Ormonde was struck by a suspicion that it was designed to make him stretch out his hand through the door, and then strike it off, and refused to run this risk. The lord deputy ended the doubt by putting in his own hand: on this Sir James unbarred the door, and they embraced one another in sight of the angry crowd. Thus this strange alarm was quieted; and Sir James, suppressing as he might his excited animosity, they became seemingly reconciled; but, probably, parted greater enemies than ever.

The effect of this incident is said to have endured even beyond the lives of the two persons between whom it occurred, and created a sense of dislike which was long kept up in their posterity.

On the death of the earl of Ormonde, Sir James contrived to take possession of his estates, which, by his great influence and authority with the whole Butler faction, he was in these lawless times enabled to maintain against Sir Pierce Butler, the rightful claimant. It does not appear that Sir Pierce had entered into any immediate course for the recovery of his rights thus usurped. He is mentioned in the peerage as being the direct descendant from Richard, the youngest son of James, third earl of Ormonde.† So remote a degree, though it cannot lessen a right, the creation of positive law, has certainly the effect of lessening the sense of it.

Such is ever the effect of lapse of time, or of any deviation from customary order, because men judge by habit rather than by computation. But at that period, the sense of legal rights was scarcely superior to the claim of usurpation maintained by force; which was still made specious by a confused notion of the rights of conquest. It was the unhappy consequence of this undefined state of personal rights, that usurpation brought with it murder and private war as the resources of justice. Pierce Butler, reduced to great distress by poverty, was also in personal danger, and obliged with his wife to take refuge in the woods. Stanihurst mentions, that so great was their want, that his wife, a daughter of the great earl of Kildare, being advanced in her pregnancy, was reduced to complain of the poorness of her diet, and to say that she was no longer in a condition to live on milk, and entreated her husband that he would procure some wine. To this Sir Pierce answered, that she should "have wine enough

* Cox.

† Lodge, Archdall.

within twenty-four hours, or feed *alone* on milk." On which, taking his page with him, he went forth to lie in ambush for the usurper of his rights.

The following day as Sir James Ormonde was on his way between Dunmore and Kilkenny, with six horsemen, he was suddenly assailed by Sir Pierce, who rushed upon him from his lurking place, and before he could receive any aid from his followers, ran him through with a spear. This occurrence probably took place in August, 1518. In Ware's *Annals* it is by some unaccountable error placed in 1497: but as the reader may recollect, the seventh earl of Ormonde lived till 1515. It is indeed highly probable, that the error was committed by his son, by whom the *Annals* were arranged from his father's papers.

Sir James Ormonde was known as a person of great ambition, craft, and courage; an excellent soldier, and famed for the use of "his weapon." His favour with the king was in a great measure owing to his valour and activity against Simnel. By his murder, Sir Pierce recovered his rights, and became eighth earl of Ormonde.

Maurice, Tenth Earl of Desmond.

DIED A.D. 1520.

THE earls of Desmond, although possessing power, influence, and extent of territory inferior to none of the great barons of English race in Ireland; yet from the remoteness of their possessions, had latterly been less concerned in the affairs and changes of the pale. As the intercourse of the English became more contracted with the decline of their power, and the diminution of their territory, the lords of Desmond became comparatively isolated in the remote province of Munster; and began to perceive the wisdom of keeping their power and persons safe from the arbitrary jurisdiction of the royal governors. The seizure and sudden execution of the eighth earl, father to the Maurice who is here to be noticed, may have much contributed to teach this lesson. The consequence was, that although they occasionally joined in insurrectionary movements, yet they neither exerted themselves prominently, nor were strictly called to account.

Maurice was son to Thomas, the eighth earl, of whom we have already made mention.* On the execution of Thomas, he was succeeded by James, the ninth earl, elder brother to Maurice. But this James, after twenty years, spent in honour and prosperity, was murdered by his own servants, in his house at Rathkeale, in the county of Limerick, in the year 1487. Maurice succeeded. His first care was to take the plotter of the murder, Shane Mantagh, whom he put to death.

Maurice, though incapacitated from personal exertion by lameness, being obliged to be carried in a horselitter, was called *Bellicosus*, for his warlike character and successes. In 1487, he gained two

* Page 404.

battles, sufficiently remarkable to be noticed by most Irish annalists and historians. In one of these he defeated and slew Murchard O'Carrol, chief of Ely, with his brother. In the other, he in like manner, defeated and slew Dermod Macarthy of Desmond—victories which though not gained in the English cause, yet as Leland remarks, contributed to the security of the English pale.

In 1497, he joined Warbeck, and besieged Waterford; but was obliged to raise the siege. Soon after he made a formal submission to the king, who was probably more pleased by the submission, than offended by the crime; he not only forgave Desmond, but granted him "all the customs, cockets, poundage, prize wines, of Limerick, Cork, Kinsale, Baltimore, and Youghall, with other privileges and advantages."*

Maurice died at Tralee, in 1520, where he was buried in the house of the friars' preachers. He left an only son, who succeeded him.

Donald O'Donell, Chief of Tirconnel.

DIED A.D. 1456.

THIS descendant of an ancient Irish race, at this period, beginning to take a more prominent place in the annals of Ireland, was elected chief of Tirconnel, in 1454. His competitor Rory O'Donell, was dissatisfied at the choice of the sept. In some time the chief was made prisoner by O'Doherty, and confined in the castle of the Island. Rory now thought that so good an opportunity of rectifying the election of his race, by a method at that time not unfrequent in Irish elections, immediately collected his friends, and betook himself to the place with the design to slay the chief. He set fire to the gate and stairs of the tower, and, but for an accident, the result of his over zeal, was in a fair way to effect his purpose. O'Donell, who saw the proceeding from within, very excusably devised a plan to interrupt his kinsman's patriotic enterprise; he prevailed on his keepers to take off the irons with which he was bound, and immediately betook himself to the top of the tower: there he stood in view of his enemy. Rory was gratified by a sight, which gave him assurance, that the victim of his princely ambition was in his power: he therefore approached in eager haste to urge his people, and inspect the state of the interior, that his rival might not live a moment longer than could be helped. But his rival, was at the same moment busy with notions of nearly the same kind: in the midst of his sanguinary eagerness, as he gazed on the subsiding flames which delayed his vengeance, poor Rory's ambition and resentment were suddenly annihilated by an enormous stone which descended from his rival's hands and stretched him lifeless at the base of the smoking tower. The chief did not live long to fulfil the promise of a reign so well begun. He died in 1456.†

* Lodge.

† Sir W. Betham's *Irish Antiquarian Researches*.

+ Inch Castle.
— W.D.

crown lands; and 2d, That he had alliance and correspondence with divers of the Irish, enemies to the state."*

Though the earl was acquitted of the express charges, when in 1519 he was summoned over to England, yet the work of enmity was not the less effective; for by means of the exposure of the policy by which Ireland was governed, and the confused state of its interests, it was made plainly apparent to the English council that there were great objections to the administration of any Irish baron. It was, therefore, now resolved to send over Thomas, lord Surrey, lord high admiral of England, with a sufficient armed force to subdue and awe the insurgent chiefs.

During his stay in England, the earl married the lady Elizabeth Gray, daughter to the marquis of Dorset. This match secured him a powerful influence at court, and had long the effect of counteracting the hostility of his enemies. He was directly taken into the king's favour and accompanied him into France, where he was present at the celebrated field of the cloth of gold, held between the French and English kings in the same year.

To pursue the remainder of his political course, without a violent interruption to the history of the country, we must now state some particulars concerning the administration of lord Surrey. He was the son of the first duke of Norfolk, whom he afterwards succeeded as second duke. He came to Ireland on the 23d of May, 1520, with an army of a thousand men, and a lifeguard of one hundred. His first contest was with Con O'Neill. O'Neill had probably a natural sense of hostility towards the successor of his kinsman, Kildare, and acted with the design to make him uneasy in his seat, and by raising as much disturbance as he could, help to work out the proof of the useful proposition, that none but the earl of Kildare could preserve the peace of the country. It seems to have been his hope to take the new governor by surprise; but the alertness, and military promptness of Surrey prevented him, and he felt it necessary to retreat into Ulster. His conduct is traced to the suggestion of Kildare, and the correspondence of this earl's enemies is filled with such complaints. It is indeed evident, that this was the interest of the earl at the time, and there is sufficient proof that he thought so himself. In common with the other great lords of the pale, he derived much of his power, and all his political weight from the cultivation of alliances of this nature. The English of the pale were protected, governed, and oppressed, by means of a power which, while it was wielded by their own lords, was yet thoroughly Irish in its composition. They were, consequently, become unwarlike in their habits, and unprovided with proper arms. Their great barons, holding, in fact, the place and power of great Irish chiefs, and regarded in this light by the natives, contrived to avail themselves of the double advantages of this twofold position. Their power and possessions had a foundation, in a great measure, independent of the English interest. The armies they led, like those they opposed, were tumultuary; they were sufficient to collect the plunder of a district, and to neutralize hostilities for the moment, and they sought no more.

* Lodge.

In the confusion thus preserved, lay the secret of their strength: the individual was above the law. An English force adequate for the purpose, and adequately maintained, would quickly end this state of turbulent confusion and arbitrary licence. Thus, while the prospect of such an interference could not fail to be welcomed with delight by the large class which was altogether dependent on tranquil industry, and subject to the varied eddies of this whirlpool of perpetual movement, it could not be regarded with any complacency by the earl of Kildare. It may therefore be admitted, on the ground of such documentary or inferential proofs as have been advanced by historians, that he adopted, at once, the obvious, yet rash and dangerous course of exciting hostility against Surrey's government. Accordingly, this nobleman soon found sufficient indications of this influence. His time and resources were lamentably wasted in enterprises which had no important result. At considerable cost, and frequent danger of his life, he traversed hostile provinces, and pursued the insurgent chief to his tower; but a submission and an empty pledge ended the affair, until it next became the marauder's convenience or pleasure to ride out on a party of plunder. The king had exhausted his father's accumulated hoards, on the gorgeous tinsel of the fields of Ardres, and wrote to his lieutenant in Ireland, that "Considering the scantitie and dearthe of vitailles in those parties, the horsemen cannot conveniently live upon their wages at the said rate, [the allowance of government for their support,] therefore be he contented that ye suffer them to take *cume and livery*, after the ancient accustomable manner there used, &c."* Such was the oppressive, unpopular, and illegal resource on which the government was thrown. From the same document it appears, that the complaints against Kildare had formed the chief substance of the representations of the Irish government. The king acknowledging the complaint, tells the lord lieutenant and council, that, "as touching the sedicious practisis, conspiracies, and subtle driftes of the erle of Kildare, his servantes, aiders, and assisters, we have committed the examination and trial of that matier to the moost Reverend Fader in God, our right entierly beloved Counsaillour, Chancellour, Cardinal and Archbishop of Yorke, &c., &c."†

The whole interval of Surrey's administration was a succession of perplexing alarms, and fatiguing, and often dangerous marches, in which the object to be attained was by no means adequate to the fatigue and danger. In one of his expeditions, lord Surrey had the vizor struck off from his helmet by a shot fired from a thick wood as he passed; and he was perhaps soon anxious to escape from a warfare in which fatigue and danger were to be thus endured without fame or honourable success. The greatest success was to bring the insurgents to the encounter; dangerous in the lurking places, into which they seemed to melt away at the approach of an English force; if they were caught in the field, it was but the slaughter of a barbarous rabble, and had no consequence. The war was one of depredation and burning, and not of arms. The chiefs had comparatively little to lose; hostilities began on their side with a knowledge of the consequences,

* Letter from Henry VIII.—*State Papers*.

† *State Papers*.

and a sufficient preparation to save themselves from them. They could drive away their cattle at the approach of the enemy; and, when any serious danger appeared, it was time enough to propose peace, swear allegiance, and observe the engagement so long as was convenient. Many of these chiefs excused their hostilities by pleading the influence of Kildare; and there is much reason to suspect, that the excuse was not without better proofs than mere assertions. A letter from Kildare to a chief of the name of O'Carrol, is quoted by Leland, as having been given to Surrey in proof of this earl's practices. It does not, however, bear the degree of evidence which the historian's statement seems to imply. The letter was not itself forthcoming when demanded by Surrey; but after much pressing and urgent persuasion, the contents of the letter were recollected and sworn to by Donogh O'Carrol. The following is the form of this person's deposition:—"He [Donogh O'Carrol] saith that in Easter week last past, the abbot of Monastri-cow, called Heke, brought a letter to O'Carrol, out of England, on the behalf of the earl of Kildare, wherein was written these words: 'There is no Irishman in Ireland I am better contented with than you; and whenever I come into Ireland I shall do you good for any thing that ye shall do for me; and any displeasure that I have done to you, I shall make you amends therefor. Desiring you to keep good peace to Englishmen, till an English deputie come there; and when any English deputy shall come thither, do your best to make war upon Englishmen there, except such as be towards me, whom ye know well yourself.'"

Surrey's representations, founded mainly on such evidence, had the effect of prepossessing the English monarch and his minister against Kildare; and when this lord lieutenant was recalled, after two years' continuance in the country, he was commanded to commit the administration to the earl of Ormonde, the rival and enemy of Kildare. Surrey's government had been productive of much good; for though he had not been enabled to remedy the vicious state of the country's laws and customs, or to put a stop to the numerous abuses which depressed and retarded the prosperity of the pale, still the mere abstinence from wrong, and the cessation of partiality, oppression, and misgovernment in the seat of administration, were felt as great and rare blessings, which shed lustre on his government, and caused regret at his departure.

The elevation of an inveterate enemy to a position which empowered him to encroach on his rights, and endanger his power, made Kildare's presence in Ireland necessary. Ormonde had the will, and many pretexts for the persecution of the Geraldine faction; and there were even territorial questions liable to be raised between these powerful earls, which it would not be well to leave undefended. Kildare returned; his influence was increased by the unpopularity of his rival. The government of Pierce earl of Ormonde was unpopular, and Kildare soon found that he might, with safety, avow his enmity. At first, he had evidently resolved to preserve appearances. His character had been shaken by the complaints of Surrey, but Ormonde was himself

* State Papers, Vol. ii. Part III. p. 45.

involved in the whispers of faction, and liable to be denounced by his victims or his enemies. Having begun, therefore, by efforts to support the deputy, Kildare soon began to enter on the more congenial course of factious underworking, so familiar to the time.

The dissensions between the earls were brought to an issue by an accidental circumstance. James Fitz-Gerald, a relation and friend of Kildare, meeting a favourite servant of Ormonde's on his way to Kilkenny, slew him. The earl of Ormonde, in his anger, transmitted a complaint to the English court, which was retaliated by the complaints and accusations of Kildare. Commissioners were appointed to try the merits of the allegations on both sides in Ireland. Here Kildare had, however, a twofold advantage; his faction in Ireland, and his wife's powerful relations in England, combined to turn the scale of judgment. By the first, the selection of the commissioners was influenced; and by the second, if necessary, the representations and testimonies must have been affected. The commission decided for him. His triumph was completed by the recall of his adversary, in whose place he was appointed as lord deputy. The whole of this transaction was evidently preconcerted in England; the commission was managed by the marquis of Dorset, and the commissioners, Sir Ralph Egerton, Sir Andrew Fitz-Herbert, and James Denton, dean of Litchfield, were appointed, and their instructions provided for the event by directing that Kildare, on his acquittal, should be named deputy in place of his accuser. This view is confirmed by the fact, that the indenture between the king and the earl bears date prior to this transaction.*

The triumph of Kildare was swelled by the joy of his numerous and powerful faction; but circumstances soon arose which involved him in trouble and danger. The earl of Desmond, whose remote position, rather than any inferiority of power, kept him apart from the main course of Irish affairs, had, it is stated by all the old historians, entered into a treasonable correspondence with the king of France, who was at the time at war with Henry; but peace being made between the kings, this correspondence was thus exposed. Kildare was ordered to march into Munster, and to apprehend Desmond. This was, however, a command opposed to all Kildare's principles of action and politics. Desmond was his kinsman, his ally, next to himself too, the most powerful and popular chief in Ireland. Formal obedience could not be avoided; he marched against Desmond, but there was a secret understanding between these great chiefs, and nothing was done in earnest. Kildare turned on his march to assist his kinsman O'Neill, against O'Donel. He also attacked the Birnes to serve Desmond. A letter of his to Desmond had been intercepted by his sister, the wife of Ormonde, and is said to have been used against him.† The recent publication of the state papers of this reign by government, has placed before us a more detailed and expanded view of these transactions than we can allow ourselves to enter upon, or than the interest of the period would justify. The principal charges occupy mainly

* Cox.

† This is verified by Kildare's own admission. See State Papers, Vol. III. Part ii. p. 121.

the several representations on either side; forming alliances with the king's enemies, winning in the king's land, or withholding his arms and submission. These statements were such as to have inevitably prejudiced with justice, and it is probable that the king and English council were fully impressed with a conviction which had so often before been the inference from similar proofs, that the country should be governed by an English governor only. Kildare's account of the letter represents it as written and intercepted long previous to the recent transactions with Desmond. He asserts that it had been seized by his own sister, Ormonde's wife, on the occasion of his messenger, a Pitsfordist, having slept at her house; that Lord Ormonde had met it against him on the commission, when the commissioners had set it aside as proceeding "of no evil intent." This account may be the truth, but it is also very likely that the letter had a distinct bearing which cast an unfavourable light on the recent accusation. The earl was recalled to answer the charges against him. From the mass of letters and articles of charge against Ormonde, we will extract a portion of one short letter, less formal and more characteristic than the long documents which precede it.

"Kildare to Henry VIII.*

***** "In my most humble manner beseeching your grace not to regard such untrue surmises of myne adversaries, till the truth bee tryed; trusting, and knowing right well, that I never did be-thought any thing whereby I should deserve your most dread displeasure, where unto I was not only bound by my duty of allegiance, but also for that in my youth I was brought up in your service, and when I came to discretion, it pleased you to make me your treasurer, and consequently [subsequently] your deputie, and gave me landis to the yearly value of 100 markes. My first wife [Elizabeth Zouch] was your poor kinswoman; and my wife now [Lady Elizabeth Gray] in like maner. And in all my troubles before this, by untrue surmises against me, ye were good and gracious unto me, which ought enough suffice to bind, to owe unto your grace, my true and faithful service. And though there were no such cause, yet could I find in my heart to serve your grace before all the princes in the world, as well for the great nobleness, valiant prowess and equity, which I ever noted in your most noble person, as also for the vertuous qualities wherein ye excell all other princes. And besides that, I do know right well, if I did the contrary, it shulde bee the distruction of me and my sequel for ever. As knoweth Almighty God, who ever have you in his tender tuicion. From my manor of Maynoth, the 17th daye of August [1525]."

Kildare was called to stand his trial in the following year (1526), and had a narrow escape. The articles of his impeachment were, that 1st, He had disobeyed the king's command by not taking the earl of Desmond. 2d, That he had contracted alliances with Irish enemies. 3d, That he had caused certain good subjects to be hanged, for no other reason than they were friends or favourites to the family of the

* State Papers, Vol. iii. p. 125.

Butlers; and lastly, that he held private intelligence with O'Niall, O'Connor, and other Irish lords, to make an inroad into Ormonde's territories.* In spite of the very strong and numerous charges contained in the letters and memorials of Ormonde, some of these charges impress the idea, that evidence of any very serious delinquency must have been wanting. The charges, most of them appear to be revivals of accusations long disposed of by the commission already mentioned. On these charges, Wolsey contrived to obtain a sentence of death against Kildare. Kildare, however, knew the true source of this decision. The lieutenant of the Tower was his warm friend, and it was agreed that he should repair to the king, as if to take his commands on the affair. There was little time to lose; Kildare was, most probably, to be beheaded in the morning early. It was late, and there was perhaps much uncertainty as to the king's being reached at the hour of midnight. Fortunately for Kildare, no such difficulty occurred: his friend stated the fact, and asked the king's pleasure. The king was much affected and surprised; the cardinal, to make the matter sure, had kept it from his knowledge, and this malicious privacy, was now favourable to his intended victim; Henry might easily have been talked into a very opposite feeling; his tyranny was the result of deliberation, his better feelings were the impulse of the moment; these were now quickened by indignation, for he saw through the conspiracy, and his arbitrary temper, prompt whether in good or evil, suggested a decided course. He forbade the execution, and prohibited any further proceeding against the earl. He took off his ring and gave it to the lieutenant to bear to Wolsey as a token of his authority. The interposition of his friends had now time to work, and the earl was liberated on their security, that he would appear when called upon to answer such charges as should be made against him. His securities were the marquis of Dorset, the countess dowager of Dorset, and several members of the family of Grey, with Sir Henry Guilford, John Abbott, and Sir John Zouch. Cox gives a curious and highly characteristic report of the speeches of Wolsey and Kildare, on the trial above referred to; but as they seem altogether unauthentic, and still more because they are too long, we omit to extract them. Cox doubts this whole account of the earl's condemnation, and he may be right enough. He asserts that there is no authority for it.

It is certain that Kildare was taken quickly into favour with the king. An extract from a letter, written by archbishop Inge and lord chief justice Birmingham, to Wolsey, dated 3d February, 1528, throws some additional light on the king's great partiality towards this earl. It also exhibits the strength of his party, and his great power in Ireland. "Thabsence of thise bothe lordes hathe greatlie enhaunsed and cou-raiged our soveraine lordes Hirish and Englisshe rebelles; whereby the londe is alway in danger, and wolde be ferr more, werr nat the fere of their retourn.

"And now, within this thre or foure daies, there is privey reaporte, that therll of Kildair, for som his mysdemeanours of late, is committed unto the tour. If it so be, the seid erll is mervellous, and hathe

* Ware.

been unknownen to us and other divers the kinges true subjectes, of this his londe. In consideration wherof, it was never so great nede to provide for defens of this poor londe, in our daies as now; for the vice deputie* is nat of power to defend the Englisshrie; and yet the poor people is ferr more chargid and oppressed by hym, than they have been, th erll of Kildair being here. He hathe no great londes of his owne, and the kinges revenues, besides the subsidie, is skante ynowe to pay the kinges officers ther ordinarie fees; and the subsidie may nat be hadde, till it be grannted by perliament, without the whiche the deputie hathe full litle to manteyn his chargies. Th erll of Kildair coude help hymself, in taking advantage of Hirishmen, better then any other here."

The state of affairs in Ireland was such as to cause serious alarm in the pale and among the members of the administration. On his departure, the earl had committed the government to his brother, the lord Thomas Fitz-Gerald of Leixlip: the annalists briefly tell us that he was removed; and his removal may be regarded as a fresh demonstration of the enmity of the faction opposed to the earl. Richard Nugent baron Delvin was substituted; but he was soon found to be unequal to the difficulties of a situation, which demanded at the time extensive power and influence. O'Connor Fally, the ally and kinsman of the Geraldines, made an irruption into the pale, and carried off a large prey into Offaly: on receiving information of this, Delvin ordered the stoppage of his pension, claimed by O'Connor as due upon certain plough-lands in Meath. A meeting was proposed at Sir W. Darcy's castle, near Ruthven; but O'Connor, whose real object was far from a desire of accommodation, contrived an ambuscade, by which he intercepted the deputy, and made him a prisoner. The historical writers on this period state, that lord Ossory (Ormonde) was now appointed in place of the imprisoned lord, and that he used every effort for his deliverance, but without effect. It is certain that considerable efforts were made by the earl of Ossory and his son, for the deliverance of Nugent; and we think it likely, that the correspondence from which this fact appears must have misled the historians; they inferred the appointment of lord Ossory from the authoritative position in which he appears during the transaction of so important a negotiation. But it seems nearly certain, from a letter of the Irish council to Wolsey on the occasion, that Thomas Fitz-Gerald was appointed by them; and it is also little probable that he would enter with any sincerity into the negotiations for the liberation of Nugent; O'Connor having probably acted as the friend of the earl, and partisan of the Geraldines.

O'Connor's claim is mentioned in the letter of the Irish council, from which our information is drawn; and from this document it appears, that they had urged the payment of his pension. This claim is also mentioned by Inge and Birmingham, in a letter to the duke of Norfolk, in which they state, that there had been continual contention on the point, "si the earl of Kildare left this."† Lord Butler, son to lord Ormonde (Ossory at the time), mentions in a letter to archbishop Inge, his own visit to O'Connor's house, where he slept and was,

* Richard Nugent, lord Delvin.

† State Papers.

with some difficulty, permitted to speak to Nugent, in presence of the O'Conors. He then mentions, that he contrived to bring away Cahir O'Conor (who was "to be the next O'Conor"), as a protection, and that he brought him with him to his father; at his father's, they prevailed on him to promise to join their party, if his brother would not "be conformable to reason:" O'Conor's chief stipulation was, that the king should not suffer the earl of Kildare to take revenge on him for taking part in the king's quarrel. Lord Butler adds, "surely, my lord, many great wise men that I have spoken with, since this misfortune happened, think precisely that it comes through the abetment of the earl of Kildare, his counsellors and band; and that they look for much more mischief, if that you see not this substantially ordered. Therefore, my lord, at the reverence of God, look substantially at this matter, and beware whom you trust that you have trusted of this band [party]. I have many things to say to your lordship, that I dare not write," &c. It would be a vain accumulation of parallel authorities to extract the abundant passages of an authentic correspondence which exhibit the sufficiently evident state of party feeling on either side. One sentence from a letter written at this time by the duke of Norfolk, probably contains the most important commentary upon the whole of these transactions. "The malice between the earls of Kildare and Ossory, is, in my opinion, the only cause of the ruin of that poor land." It is also obvious, from another letter written to Wolsey, by the same nobleman, that his opinion was for sending over Kildare, as the best course under the circumstances.*

Wolsey's own opinion seems to have been formed on something of a compromise between the extreme opinions of the opposite parties; he advised the commission of the administration to the Butlers, but still so as to communicate the impression to the Irish, that Kildare, who was nominally still deputy, should soon be sent over. For this reason, also, he would not advise that this earl should be discharged of the office; and further, that he thought it expedient to impress him with a sense of responsibility. It is evident through the entire of the long paper,† from which this opinion is taken, that he attributes the main disturbances to the influence of Kildare. The following extract may satisfy the reader:—"Thies folowing bee the causes, whiche movethe the saide lorde cardinall to thinke, in his pore judgement, that the erle of Kildare shuld not bee put from his rome at this tyme, but the same to bee deferred, untill a more mature consultation were takene and had therein; soo that, upon his discharge, substanciall direction ymmediately mought bee takene for the defence of the said lande, in thavoiding of suche perill and dannger, as mought folowe.

"The firste cause is, that syns the harveste and collectè is nowe at hande, by reason thereof, no provision canne bee sente from hens, in tyme for the withstanding thereof, but that it suld bee in the powre of the Irishe rebelles, combined to gidder, to distroye and devaste the hoole Englishery, if, by good wisdom, dexteritie, and pollicie, they bee not conteyned by dulce and faire meanes, and somme hope of the erle of Kildares retourne: for it is greatly to bee fered, that the said

* Letter to Wolsey. *State Papers*, Ib. p. 135.

† *State Papers*, Ib. p. 136.

erle of Kildares kynnysfolkes, servanntes, and suche other wild Irishe lordis (with whome the said erle hathe, and hathe had, intelligence), if they shall perceive that he is clerely excludid from his office, and in the kingis displeasure, they shall peradventure, for revenging thereof, seeing they may nowe commodiously, in maner without resistence, doo the same, over ronne the hoole Englishe boundes and pale, and doo suche high displeasure, as woll not, withoute an army royall, and mervailous great expensis, bee redubbid or repayred hereafter; where as they, being in somme hope, and not in utter disperation of the said erles retourne, there is some apparence that they woll forbere from doing the said extreme hurtis, and soo, by such meanes, the said danners maye bee wisely put over, till other better provysion shall bee made and devised for withstanding of their malicious attemptates.

"The second cause, why there shuld bee none other deputie made at this tyme thene, is, that as long as the said erle of Kildare is not discharged of his rome, he shalbe aferd that any-thing shuld bee done or attempted, to the great hurte of the Englishery, by those that he hathe intelligence with, or any others, supposing that the same mought be layed and arrected unto his charge; forasmoeche as he standeth onerate, as yet, as the kingis deputie of that lande: where as he, being thereof discharged, shall litle or nothing care, what may comme of the said land, or what hurte or dammage bee inferrid thereunto."

Lord Ossory was soon after sent over as deputy; and the lord chancellor having died of the sweating sickness, which was this year (1528) very prevalent and fatal in Ireland, a creature of Wolsey's was appointed, with the well understood purpose of giving all annoyance possible to the earl of Kildare. The earl on his part, sent over his daughter, lady Slane, to stir up O'Niall and O'Conor, his friends and kinsmen, to oppose and thwart the lord deputy. She was, as Cox observes, "unhappy in being successful;" having thus caused great confusion and devastation,* which ultimately told with nearly fatal weight against the earl himself.

For the present, however, affairs began to wear a favourable aspect for Kildare. For although his practices were thoroughly known to all parties, and fully understood by the king, they had not the effect of prejudicing his reputation with the council, or of causing any serious displeasure in Henry's mind. His misdeeds were consistent with the principles of the age, and practised by his rivals and opponents according to their power. The one question looked upon was expediency, and Kildare's great power for good or evil, suggested the trial of making him a friend, and securing his good offices by favourable conditions. In pursuance of this object, the king determined to liberate the earl, and send him over with Sir William Skeffington, who was in 1529 appointed deputy to the duke of Richmond. The duke was made lord lieutenant, and held the office for life. Though it was thought inexpedient to intrust the earl with the government, or in any way to increase powers already too large for the peace of the country, yet his

* Letter from Ossory to Wolsey.—*State Papers*, p. 143. See also the letter which follows from lord Butler, and the Paper of Instructions from the deputy and council, p. 145.

pride was to be conciliated, and his good offices secured. The instructions to Skeffington were prepared accordingly; particular stress is laid upon the importance of keeping the peace between "the king's well beloved cousins, Kildare, Desmond, and Ossory," as a principal means to preserve the peace of the country, and consult its interests. Amongst these instructions in which the deputy is desired to call a parliament—to get a subsidy before its sitting, to charge the lands of the clergy, to repress military exactions—he is also specially desired to assist the earl of Kildare in his enterprises.* The paragraph is worth extracting. "And whereas therle of Kyldare hath made faithfull promise unto the kyniges highness to employe and endeavor hym selfe, to the uttermost of his power, for the annoyance of the kynges sayd rebellious subjectes of the wyld Irishry, as well by makynge ex-courses upon them as otherwise; farasmuche as the men of warre, now sent oute of this realme with the sayde deputie, shall move in suche case, doo right good stede to the sayd erle, in such exployttes as he shall make, whene the sayde deputie shall not fortune to procede ther-unto hym selfe, shall, at the requisicion of the sayd erle, send unto hym the sayd men of warre, or as many of them as he shall requier for makynge of suche exployttes, reserving a convenient number of them to remayne and attend upon hym selfe; and the proffyttes of suche impositions, that is to say, of bestes or other thyng, that at an entre or exployte shalbe imponed or had, by way of patsment or agreement upon thenemyse, to be alwayese the moyte answered to the kynges highnes, to thandes of the sayde undertresawrer, and the other moyte to renue to therle of Kyldare, yf he shall make thexploite, and putt the imposicion, and to his company not havynge the kynges wages, to be ordred and divided by his discrecion, as hath bene accustomed."†

The arrival of Kildare excited among his friends and powerful party, a sensation of great joy. He was, together with the deputy, received by a procession of the citizens, near St Mary's abbey.‡ His conduct was, for some time, conformable to the expectations of the government. He probably aided the deputy in an invasion of the O'Mores; and in the following year (1531), he certainly accompanied him in an expedition into Ulster.

The habits of Kildare were factious; he was not likely to submit with much patience to have his predilections and animosities curbed by one whom he must have regarded as an inferior: it was not long before ill-will began to grow up between him and the deputy, who appears to have soon entered into a friendly understanding with the earl of Ossory. The death of Wolsey, which occurred in the year at which we are arrived, gave also an impulse to the ambition of Kildare. Both he and the deputy now commenced their efforts to undermine each other in the favour of the king. With Skeffington was joined the Butler faction, and their various correspondence, which, if quoted here, would appear as the repetition of the same characteristic complaints and charges of which the reader is now fully aware, must have at length produced a strong prejudice against the earl in the English council. He became at last so impatient, that he could no longer be

* State Papers.

† *Ib.*, Vol. ii. p. 150.

‡ Ware.

content to suffer their efforts for his overthrow to pass unresisted. His enemies were superior in the game of intrigue, cabal, and private diplomacy: his character was framed for less artificial courses, and in going over to speak for himself, Kildare undoubtedly best consulted his own interests; with the warm and arbitrary temper of Henry, which often led him to act with independent decision on the impulse or conviction of the moment, the frank and hardy simplicity of the earl was likely to have more influence than those refined and courtly arts, of which experience had taught him the true value.

He went over in 1532, and so managed matters at court, that with the help of his English friends he prevailed to have Skeffington removed, and himself appointed deputy in his place. He was as usual welcomed with acclamations in Dublin, when he received the sword from the hands of his enemy. Instead, however, of recollecting the example of his father, and the experience of his own life, and confirming the advantages he had gained by a prudent self-control, and by conciliating enemies for whom he was no match at their own game, the earl acted with precipitate rashness, and only recognized his character as governor, as the means of success in the party hostilities into which he threw himself with increased infatuation of spirit. He made a furious incursion into the districts of Kilkenny, and committed devastation on Lord Ossory's lands; he encouraged the O'Nials in an attack on the English villages in Louth. The clamour of an irritated and increasing faction grew louder, and their accusations more weighty. Against this menacing juncture of affairs, Kildare's power and spirit rather than his discretion maintained him for a while. He was not solicitous to gain friends, and carried all his objects with a high hand. He married his daughters to O'Connor Faly, and to O'Carrol, and the alliances which thus strengthened him in the country, helped to confirm the reports of his accusers.

He called a parliament in Dublin, in the May of the next year 1533. Its acts were not important; when it was over he invaded the country of Ely O'Carrol, at the desire of his son-in-law, Ferganim O'Carrol, who asserted himself to be the chief of that district. In this affair Kildare received a bullet in the thigh. Ware tells that on this occasion, a soldier who was standing near observed the earl show some signs of pain, and said, "My lord, why do you sigh so, I was myself thrice shot with bullets, and I am now whole." "I wish," replied the earl, "you had received the fourth in my stead." A letter in the state papers from "Cowley to Cromwell," adverts to a report prevalent at this time that the "lord of Kildare was shot with a hand gun through the side under the ribs, and so lyeth in great danger."

In the year 1533, a deputation was sent over to England, from the Irish council, with representations of the state of the country, and private instructions to lay every thing amiss to the charge of Kildare. This commission was trusted to John Allen, Master of the Rolls. The written instructions are published in the *State Papers*, and convey a just notion of the low state of the pale at the time. We shall therefore enumerate the heads of complaint, from that document. It begins by stating that "the lande" is fallen into such decay, that the English language, dress and laws are not used, except within a com-

pass of about twenty miles. This evil is attributed first and chiefly to taking of coyne and livery, "without order, after men's own sensual appetites;" also "cuddies' gartie, taking of caanes for felonies, murders, and all other offences." Secondly, the disuse of arms among the English, who formerly practised archery, and kept stout English servants able to defend them; instead of which they had now in course of time fallen into the custom of employing native servants, who could "live hardily without bread and other good victuals;" they also preferred Irish tenants, because they could make them pay higher rents, and submit to "other impositions," which English husbandmen could not afford to give. Thirdly, it is alleged, that the lords of the pale, instead of retaining soldiers in their castles at their own cost, for the defence of the pale, that they kept them at the expense of the king's poor subjects, on whom they were a severe burthen. Fourthly, they complain of the "liberties," kept by the great lords, by which the king was defrauded of his revenues. A still more injurious abuse, was the payment of "black rent," to the native chiefs for their forbearance and protection, by which they were encouraged in violence, and enriched at the expense of the English. To this complaint it is added, that when they committed their robberies on the king's subjects, and were pursued by an English force, the lords deputy instead of restoring the property thus recovered to the people who had been plundered, kept it to enrich themselves. Fifthly, they attribute these evils to the appointment of Irish deputies, and also to the frequent change of deputies. Sixthly, the negligence in keeping the king's records. Seventhly and lastly, they complain of the king having lost and given away his manors, lordships, &c., so that he had not left any resources in the country for the maintenance of his government. This paper of instructions is signed by the bishops of Armagh, Dublin, Meath, Kildare, the abbots of St Mary's abbey, and Thomas' court, and by lords Gormanstown, Trimleston, &c. In an annexed paper, they propose answerable remedies for all these abuses; and among other things state, that "there is grown such a rooted dissension between the earls of Kildare and Ossory, that in our opinions it is not likely, and the experience of many times proved manifesteth the same, to bring them to good conformitie, especially if either of them be deputie, or aspire to that roome." Such was probably the hint on which Allen was to speak; and such were the various topics on which the earl was assailable.

These representations were backed by an ample correspondence in which the same complaints and suggestions were urged with the added weight of private communication. Among the documents appertaining to this time, is a lengthened statement not inappropriately called a "boke," by the writer, which sets the disorders of the period in the strongest light. Amongst other things, it states with considerable force the evils arising from the great power acquired by Kildare. We shall have to recur to this document hereafter.

The result of all these representations to Kildare was unfortunate. He received an order to go over into England, that he might answer the charges against him. Kildare was alarmed; he sent over his wife to stir the zeal of her own powerful kindred in his behalf, to have the

order revoked. In the meantime he found some pretence in the disordered state of affairs to delay his own journey. The subterfuge was however of no avail; he was again ordered over, and directed to commit the government during his absence to some one for whose conduct he could be answerable. Even in his fear, the habitual care of his own power was uppermost in Kildare's mind: he garrisoned his castles and armed them from the king's ordnance, in defiance of an express prohibition. His greatest and most fatal error, was the committing the government to his own son, the lord Thomas Fitz-Gerald, a youth without experience, and not above twenty-one years of age. The fatal consequences to the earl, the numerous members of this great family, and to the unhappy youth himself, must be separately related. Excited to rebellion by the artifice of his father's enemies, a few months closed his rash career. The earl died of grief in the Tower, in the chapel of which he was buried, 12th December, 1534.* An act of attainder was passed against him and his family, but his son Gerald was afterwards restored to the title and estates.

The college of Maynooth was founded by this earl in 1521.

Lord Thomas Fitz-Gerald.

BORN A. D. 1513.—BEHEADED, A. D. 1536.

As the best continuation of the history of the events mentioned in the previous memoir, we shall here subjoin some account of the brief and tragic career of the unfortunate Thomas Fitz-Gerald, son to the powerful earl last noticed.

On the earl's departure for England, he committed the government to lord Thomas, his eldest son, not yet more than twenty-one years of age. The act was in the highest degree rash and fatal; but the earl did not neglect to give his son such prudent advice, that if it be not recollected how wide is the distinction between sensible reasoning and prudent conduct, one may wonder that the giver had not acted more prudently himself.

This imprudent commission might have been attended with no ill consequences, if the youthful deputy had no enemies to deal with, but those of the pale; for he was brave, alert, and possessed of no small military talent. But the danger of his situation arose from those who should have been his friends and trusty advisers; the powerful faction which had undermined the earl, were now prepared to follow up the blow, by taking advantage of the inexperience and impetuosity of his son. They began with artful attempts to provoke his temper by petty slights, and it became evident to the youth that there was a cabal raised against him in the council. A few trivial anecdotes are told by Cox, which have their place at this stage of his history. At a banquet, he met with Allen, Master of the Rolls, a bitter enemy of his father's; the conversation turned upon heraldry: in its course, Allen turning to the deputy, said, that "his lordship's house gave a marmo-

* State Papers, lxxxvi.

set, whose property it was to eat her tail; to whom the deputy replied, that he had been fed by his tail, and should take care that his tail did not eat him." On another occasion he kept the council waiting for some hours, when the archbishop of Dublin at last grew impatient, and asked if it were not a pretty matter that they should stay so long for a boy. Lord Thomas who was at the moment entering the room, overheard the remark, and told the council that "he was sorry they should stay so long for a boy."*

It did not require much observation to apprise lord Thomas that he was surrounded by watchful and malignant enemies, who would let pass no occasion to injure him. His father's strong injunctions, might nevertheless have restrained him within the path of prudence, had not his enemies, or indiscreet friends originated a false report, that his father was put to death in the Tower. It was added, that his five uncles were also to be seized and executed, and that the same fate was designed for himself. To favour this report, it is affirmed, letters were written and sent in different directions, and it was perhaps by contrivance, that one of these fell into the hands of Deluhide, lord Thomas's confidential adviser. The young Geraldine rushed into the snare, if such it was, and at once flinging aside deliberation and every purpose but revenge, he associated himself with O'Nial and O'Conor the fast friends of his family, and resolved on the most violent and immediate measures. Summoning together such of his followers as could be collected, he rode through the city at the head of 140 armed cavalry (in shirts of mail), to Dame's gate, where he crossed the river, and proceeded straight to Mary's abbey, where the council were sitting at the moment. Attended by these followers, he entered the chamber and sternly took his seat, his disordered appearance indicated repressed passion and an angry purpose; and as the foremost of his followers were pressing into the chamber, the members of the council began to shew signs of alarm. Lord Thomas sternly commanded his followers to be silent, and addressed the council with a fierce calmness of tone and manner. He told them that notwithstanding his wrongs, he would act as a soldier and a gentleman, and that he did not mean to use to their hurt the sword that had been intrusted to him. That he now came to return it. That it had a pestilent edge bathed in the blood of the Geraldines, to whom it now menaced farther injury. That he came to resign it, and would thenceforth use his own. That he warned them that he was become their enemy, and the enemy of the king, whom he renounced and declared war against from that moment. "I am none of Henry's deputies," he concluded, "I am his foe, I have more mind to conquer than to govern, to meet him in the field than to serve him in office: if all who have been wronged by him, would unite, as I trust they will, he should learn of the treatment due to tyranny and cruelty, such as never have been exceeded by the most infamous tyrants in ancient history."† Some such step was expected from lord Thomas, and it is possible that the consternation produced by this speech, was nothing more than the anxiety which some present may have felt for their personal safety. And the historians who

* Cox.

† Cox, Holinshed.

describe the scene, appear to agree, that the speech which is attributed to Cromer, the chancellor, was insincere. It was perhaps, partly fear, and partly policy, that suggested the answer of the chancellor, when lord Thomas returning him the sword of state was turning to depart: but it is to be recollected, that Cromer had been the friend of the Geraldines. We are therefore not inclined to set down altogether to political finesse, the affecting appeal which this state officer is said to have addressed to the rash youth. Catching the young lord by the wrist, with streaming eyes and affectionate emphasis Cromer reminded him of the affectionate terms on which they had ever been. And then solemnly warned him against the rash delusion of imagining that any force he could bring together and support in the field, could avail against the strength of the kingdom and the power of the king. He suggested the uncertainty of the report of the earl's death. He urged the sacredness of the kingly character, and reminded him of the uniform fate of rebellion.

These obvious suggestions had little effect on the young lord, though urged with great force of language, and earnestness of manner.

While the chancellor was thus addressing the impatient young lord, his rude followers who did not understand the English language, looked with wonder at the speaker, and listened to his oration "which he set forth with such a lamentable countenance, as his cheeks were all blubbered with tears."* Some of them supposed he was preaching, others that he was spouting heroic verse in praise of lord Thomas, the pride and glory of the Geraldines. No sooner was the supposed song or sermon ended, than Denelan, lord Thomas's bard took up the strain, and thundered out the praises of his lord, in all the sounding modulation and figurative affluence of the Irish tongue. He celebrated his courage and high blood, his personal beauty and magnificent appearance, calling him by the popular name of silken Thomas, from the richness of his attire, and that of his train whose armour was embroidered with silk, and concluded by telling him significantly, that he delayed too long there. Lord Thomas was more alive to flattery, and the sense of admiration than to fear or reason: but it is not necessary to assume with some writers, that his purpose was in any way affected by this uncouth stimulus. His high-flown confidence in the power of his family, was enough to repel reasons grounded on their insufficiency for rebellion: he knew the insincerity of those before whom he stood, and felt that he had gone too far to retract with safety: scorning to be cajoled, he made a brief and stern reply, and flinging the sword on the council table, he left the chamber with his followers. The chancellor who had been so pathetic in attempting to dissuade him, now lost no time in writing and despatching an account to king Henry, by his own servant Thomas Brode, as we learn from a letter of baron Finglas, written to Cromwell at the same time.† Orders were also sent to the mayor to seize him as he passed through the city. But this was a command which there was no force to execute: the city had been nearly depopulated by the plague. The archbishop Allen, and baron Finglas took refuge

* Cox.

† Finglas to Cromwell.—State Papers, Let. 75.

in the castle, and lord Thomas proceeded to raise the surrounding country, with the resolution to make himself master of Dublin. He next looked round for allies, and endeavoured to strengthen his cause to the utmost. He sent an ambassador to the pope, and one to the king of Spain, he also wrote a pressing letter to lord Butler, son to Lord Ossory, and his cousin, to engage his assistance. To this young lord he proposed, that they should conquer the whole island, and share it between them. Lord Butler wrote him in reply, a letter of friendly but yet rough rebuke. Saying, that in such a quarrel, "I would rather die thine enemy, than live thy partner," and advising him, that "ignorance and error with a certain idea of duty, have carried you unawares to this folly, not yet so rank but that it may be cured." On receiving which letter, lord Thomas immediately proceeded to invade his lands about Kilkenny. In this district he committed much destructive ravage, and then returned toward Dublin. It was his design to lay siege to the castle. The inhabitants of the city were far from being favourable to his cause: they largely contributed to supply the castle with provisions. Lord Thomas in his resentment, directed Fingal, from which they drew their chief supplies, to be plundered. The citizens attempted to rescue the prey, as a party of the marauders passed by Kilmainham. But they were worsted in the attempt, with the loss of 80 citizens. Availing himself of the consternation thus produced, lord Thomas sent word to the city, that though he could destroy them, he would be content to spare them, if they would allow him to besiege the castle. The mayor and corporation were perplexed, they had no desire to yield, but the danger of resistance seemed rather formidable. In this strait they sent information of their condition to the king, and advised with the constable of the castle. This officer did not think they could prevent the siege, and stipulated for a liberal supply of men and provisions. The mayor sent in 20 tons of wine, 24 tons of beer, 2000 dried ling, 16 hogsheads of beef, 20 chambers, and an iron chain for the drawbridge.

The possibility of falling into the hands of the lord Thomas, awakened the fears of his enemy the archbishop Allen. Should the castle be stormed, his life might be seriously endangered in the insolence of victory: little moderation was to be anticipated from the late scene in the council chamber. Under this alarming impression, Allen resolved to escape into England, where alone he could find security from the threatened danger.

Awaiting the concealment of darkness, on the evening of the same day, Allen got on board a vessel near Dame's gate, and as he felt himself on the waters perhaps gratulated himself on his escape from the fiery Geraldine and his ruffian band. He was roused from his dream of security, by the information that his vessel was stranded, and could not be disengaged from the sands, near Clontarf. A fact which may indicate the precipitation of the fear which had urged him to sail without the tide. It is, however, said that the pilot was a Fitz-Gerald, and it is probable that the mishap was contrived. Allen was highly alarmed, his enemies were not far off, and while he calculated the probability of falling into their hands, he thought with regretful longing of the castle, from the shelter of which he had rashly fled. The only

resource left, was a village called Artayne,* not far from the shore where he was forced to land. There he might still hope for a short concealment, until the means of escape should offer. But unhappily for this hope, the report of his being there was straight conveyed to his enemies. Early the next morning, the lord Thomas with two of his uncles, John and Oliver, were at the door of the hut in which he lay. Two men, John Zeling and Nicholas Wafer, were sent in for him. These ruffians found archbishop Allen on the bed where he lay trembling in the agony of a terror which but too justly estimated his danger; and seizing him with savage violence, dragged him out in his shirt upon the road. Naked and trembling, he threw himself on his knees before his enemies, and with a suppliant voice and countenance, begged pity for the love of God on a Christian and an archbishop.

What followed has received different constructions. The lord Thomas turned away, saying to his followers "take away the clown," on which they fell upon the poor old man and beat his brains out.

Such was the end of this unfortunate prelate. To suppose that his murder was intended by lord Thomas, is hardly consistent with the impression made by his general character; though proud, impetuous and rash, he was not without generosity, and the common sense of humanity. Yet the combination of circumstances is such as to suggest a less favourable decision: it is hard to believe that he did not know his followers well enough to be aware of the consequence of his own words and actions; or, that they would have had the gratuitous audacity to murder an old priest, before their chief, without any order or distinct understanding to that effect. If the lord Thomas's manner was sufficiently equivocal to countenance the mistake of his meaning, we should be inclined to call the ambiguity intentional. Nor should the aggravating circumstances, of the age, rank, profession and helpless condition of the sufferer, weigh so far as to repel these suspicions. Against this, it is enough to recollect the cause of the young Geraldine's resentment: the supposed execution of his father had driven him into rebellion, and he probably saw in Allen the chief instrument of his death. If such was his impression, revenge would appear a sacred duty, and the terrors of the victim were but the needful demands of vindictive feeling. This is a true, though fearful aspect of human nature. We are still, however, not compelled to have recourse to this conclusion. The two uncles, whose characters we know not, may have given the private order or signal. Nor is it quite impossible, that the impression that Allen was the cause of their lord's death, may have induced the murderers to imagine that the service would be acceptable, and they knew that it could be done with impunity. The following is the statement of Robert Reilly, who assisted in the murder, made on his examination when he had delivered himself up to government. "The lord Thomas, accompanied by J. Fitz-Gerald, and about 40 others, went to Artayne, where the archbishop lay, at the house of Mr Hothe, and there the prelate was murdered. But whether it was by lord Thomas's command or not, he

* State Papers.

could not say. But he admits, that on the same day, he was sent by Fitz-Gerald to Maynooth, with a casket which his master had taken from the bishop. And that lord Thomas afterwards sent one Charles his chaplain to the bishop of Rome, to the intent (as he had heard) of obtaining absolution for killing the bishop."

The murderers were excommunicated, and a copy of the sentence was sent to aggravate the suffering of the unhappy earl of Kildare in his imprisonment. It is published at full length in the *State Papers*, from a copy addressed for "Mr Lieutenant, at the king's Tower, London."*

Lord Thomas's party next took lord Howth and Mr Luttrell prisoners in their own houses; and being permitted by the mayor, according to the arrangement already mentioned, he proceeded to besiege the castle. For this purpose he detached 600 men, under the command of Field, Zeling, Wafer, &c., who planted two or three small cannon (called falcons) near Preston's inns, against the castle. Having obtained possession of many of the children of the citizens, they threatened to expose them in their trenches, if the castle guns should be turned that way.

It was in this interval that lord Thomas himself, with O'Niall and others, went to fulfil his menace to lord Butler, by invading the county of Kilkenny, which they laid waste to Thomastown. We have already mentioned the result. The Butlers were defeated, and lord Butler wounded.

In the mean time, alderman Herbert, who had been sent over by the corporation of Dublin to the king, returned with an assurance of immediate aid. On this, the citizens took courage, and ordered their gates to be shut. The rebels, whom they had admitted in their fears, now attempted to escape. Some swam the Liffey, but the greater part were secured.

On hearing this, lord Thomas left Kilkenny and summoned the force of the pale. He seized on many children of citizens who were at school in the country.†

He also sent an expostulation to the city, reproaching them with their breach of agreement and demanding the liberation of the prisoners. But his reproaches and demands met with equal disregard. He, therefore, attacked the castle from Ship Street, but was repelled by the fire of its battery. He then moved his position to Thomas Court, where he pulled down the street and made a gallery for the protection of his men. He burnt the New Street, and planted a gun against Newgate, which shot a man inside through the gate. His men were, in turn, severely cut up by the enemy's fire, and they were very much irritated by the success with which their fire was returned by Staunton, the gaoler of Newgate. An instance is mentioned of the skill of Staunton. Seeing one of the enemy taking aim at the loop-hole, from which he had been firing, he shot him through the head before he had time to fire; then rushing out by a postern, he brought in the gun of the fallen rebel before any attempt could be made to prevent him. This so enraged the troop of lord Thomas, that they brought fire and attempted to burn the gate.

* State Papers, lxxxi. p. 217.

† Cox.

The citizens, after a little, began to perceive that lord Thomas was not sincerely supported by his men, who had been most of them compelled into the service. Headless arrows were shot over the walls, and other signs of remissness appearing, a sally was resolved. A report was first spread that succours had arrived from England; and before the artifice could be detected they rushed with sudden impetuosity through the burning and smoking ruins on the enemy. Fitz-Gerald's army scattered away before the attack. One hundred were slain and his cannon taken.

After this misfortune, it is likely that lord Thomas had not much confidence in the result of a message to the city, proposing "that his men who were prisoners should be enlarged; that the city should pay one thousand pounds in money, and five hundred in wares; to furnish him with ammunition and artillery; to intercede with the king for his pardon, and that of his followers." To these demands, of which the last should of itself have made the rest seem frivolous, the city answered by its recorder, "that if he would deliver up their children they would enlarge his men; that they were impoverished with his wars, and could not spare either wares or money; if he intended to submit, he had no need of artillery and ammunition, if not they would not give him rods to whip themselves; that they expected he would request good vellum parchment to engross his pardon, and not artillery to withstand his prince; that they promised all the intercession they could by word or letter."*

Lord Thomas agreed with the citizens on these terms. It was all he could do at the moment. He thus recovered his men. Having given and received hostages, he raised the siege, and sending his men and military stores to Howth, he went to Maynooth, and left directions for the storing and fortifying the castle against a siege: and then speedily returned to his little army near Howth. In the meantime a landing had been effected by a party of English, who, with an imprudence not easily accounted for, had been separated from the main detachments under Sir William Brereton and Skeffington, at the same time entering the bay with a sufficient, though small force, sent over in aid of the pale and city. The small party, commanded by two captains Hamerton, amounted to 180 men; on their way to Dublin they were met by the lord Thomas, and a sharp encounter took place, in which they were all slain or taken. Lord Thomas was wounded in the forehead by one of the Hamertons. Encouraged by a success, from which considering the disparity of numbers and arms, no very satisfactory inference could be soberly drawn; he now led his men to the heights of Howth in the vain hope to prevent any further landing of the English by a feeble cannonade from a scanty and inefficient battery. He seems to have forgotten the other coast of the bay: the firing only served to prevent Sir William Brereton from attempting a useless and dangerous collision, and probably informed him of the fate of the previous party. It is mentioned that Rouks, Fitz-Gerald's pirate, took one ship laden with English horses: but he could not prevent the English from landing at several points. Sir William Brereton and Skeffington landed without

* Cox.

opposition, and marched into Dublin, where it is needless to describe how gladly they were received. Their arrival was felt on both sides to amount to a decisive change of their respective positions. Lord Thomas must have felt his hopes expire when from the height on which he stood, he caught the distant acclamations of the city, which in its weakest moment had defied him.

Many circumstances, however, were unfavourable to the active exertions of the deputy Skeffington, and protracted the rebellion. Skeffington was himself ill—the winter was at hand—it was late in October—and the present state of the rebels required more distant and extended operations than the season or the strength of the English force permitted. Under these circumstances the deputy confined his operations, and awaited further supplies of men. He only marched to Drogheda, on the report that it was besieged by lord Thomas; and remained there about a week.

The winter passed without any decided event; but the suffering of the pale was unusually severe, from the activity of the rebels, to whom no adequate resistance could be made. Lord Thomas, himself, went into Connaught, to engage the aid of the western chiefs.

It is said that the citizens of Dublin and the English troops were much discontented at the inactivity of Skeffington, whose illness produced debility of mind and body. Early in March, however, active steps were resolved on, and Sir William Brereton was appointed to command a party against the strong castle of Maynooth. On his way he had an encounter with the rebels, and defeated them with great slaughter; and on the 16th March he invested Maynooth. He raised a strong battery against the north side of the castle, and sent in a summons to the garrison to surrender, with offers of pardon and reward. His summons and offers were rejected with scornful derision, and he opened his fire upon the walls. The castle was well supplied and garrisoned, and fortified with walls of immense solidity. The artillery of the time was comparatively inefficient, and that of Brereton not of the best. A fortnight passed, and no considerable impression was made; so that it became a matter of doubt and strong apprehension that the lord Thomas might be enabled to relieve the castle before they could obtain possession of it. Fortunately a result which must have led to a continuance of this pernicious war, and to a vast increase of slaughter, was prevented by an act of perfidy, which, if it has seldom been paralleled, has never been exceeded.

The castle was commanded by Christopher Parese, the foster brother of lord Thomas, and bound to him not only by the common pledges of important trust and obligation but by every tie of gratitude and sacred understanding of affection and duty. This base wretch, with a cowardice or venality disgraceful even in a bad cause, had conveyed to Skeffington an intimation that he would put the castle in his hands for a sum of money and certain other stipulations. Skeffington consented, and came off to the besieging army to take possession. Parese took advantage of a small success gained in a sally of the garrison, and probably preconcerted, to make them all drunk at night; and while they were in this condition, he gave the signal to the English, who, meeting no resistance, scaled the walls and took possession without resistance.

The spoil of the castle was very rich, for it was the best furnished castle in the island. Brereton planted his standard on the turret, and in the afternoon Skeffington entered the walls. It now remained to discharge his obligations to the traitor. Parese, triumphant in success and solicitous to receive his reward, was not slack to present himself before the lord deputy. A few minor matters were first attended to. Two singers came and "prostrated themselves, warbling a sweet sonnet, called *dulcis amica*;" their harmony won the favour of the chief justice Aylmer, at whose request they were pardoned. The deputy next addressed himself to Parese, and told him, that the service he had done in saving charge and bloodshed to the English was so great, that he thought it should be taken into consideration; and for this purpose, it was desirable first to ascertain what benefits he received in the service of Fitz-Gerald; Parese in his eagerness swallowed the bait; only intent on magnifying his own merits and importance, he detailed the advantages he had reaped from a long course of unremitting generosity, kindness, and affectionate confidence, and unconsciously unmasked the heartless baseness of his conduct and character, to his revolted and loathing hearers; he was lord Thomas' foster brother, he owed his whole importance and all he possessed to his munificence, and was placed by his confiding regard in the first place of trust and honour among his people; "and how Parese," said the deputy, "couldst thou find it in thy heart to betray so kind a lord?" Parese stood confounded—he had forgotten himself too far—he felt the load of contempt that breathed around him, and perhaps, for there is pride without honour, he wished so foul a deed undone. He was not long allowed to ponder on his position. "Go," said the lord deputy to an officer, "see him paid the price of his treachery, and then, without a moment's delay, see his head cut off." Parese had the coolness to say, "Had I known this, your lordship should not have had the castle so easily." The deputy was silent, but a person who was present exclaimed, "Too late," and this exclamation passed into a popular saying, "Too late, says Boyce."*

Of this latter incident, the official account of the lord deputy and the council take no notice. It is not unlikely that, considering the game of complaint and misrepresentation that seems to have so deeply played on either side, that it was deemed expedient to sink an incident that lowered the honour of a success which was necessary as a set off against the charge of dilatoriness and inefficiency. The description contained in this despatch, may be received as a correct outline of the facts of the siege. The deputy only forgot to mention that the garrison was drunk while he was performing his gallant *coup de main*. For the same reason he denied himself the honour of his severely equitable dealing with the traitor. But we see no reason to doubt the story of the annalists. The reader is fairly entitled to both. Here is the official account.

* Cox.

“The lord deputy and council of Ireland, to king
Henry VIII.

“May it please your moost excellent highness to be advertised, that I, your deputie, with your armye in thes parties, the 14th day of Marche last past, beseaged the castell of Maynuth, which by your traitor and rebell, Thomas Fitz-Geralde, was so stronglie fortified, booth with men and ordenance, as the liek hath not been seen in Irelande synes anny your moost nobell progenitors had furst domynion in the lande. Ther was within the same, above 100 habill men, whereof wer 60 gonners. The 16th day of the said monith your ordenance was bent upon the north-west side of the dungeon of the same castell, which ded baitter the tope therof on that wise, as ther ordenance within that parte was dampned; which doone, your ordenance was bent upon the northe side of the base corte of the said castell at the north-east ende wherof ther was new made a very stronge and fast bulwark, well garnissed with men and ordenance, which the 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, and 22d dayes, of the said monith, ded beat the same, by night and daye, on that wise, that a great batery and a large enterie was made ther; whereupon the 23d day, being Tewsdai next before Eister day,* ther was a Galiarde assaulte gyven betwixt fower and fyve of the clocke in the morning, and the base corte entered. At which entery ther was slayne of the warde of the castell aboute 60, and of your grace's armye no more but John Griffen yemen of your moost honorable gaurde, and six other, which wer killed with ordenance of the castell at the entree. Howbeit, if it had not pleased God to preserve us, it wer to be mervelled that we had no more slayne. After the base corte was thus wonne, we assaulted the great castell, which within awhile yielded; wherin was the dean of Kildare, Cristofer Parys, capitaine of the garysone, Donough O'Dogan, maister of thordenance, Sir Symon Walshe, priste and Nicholas Wafer, which tooke tharchbishop of Dublin, with dyvers other gunners and archers to the number of 37; which wer all taken prysoners, and ther lifes preserved by appoyntment, untill they shulde be presented to me, your deputie, and then to be orderid, as I and your counsaill thought good. And considering the high enterprise and presumption attempted by them ayenst your grace's crowne and majestie, and also that if by anny meane they shuld escape, the moost of theym beyng gunners, at some other tyme wold semblablie elliswhear, aide your traitors, and be example and meane to others to doo lykewise, we all thought expecient and requisite, that they shulde putto execution, for the dread and example of others. According wherunto, the Thursday following, in the morning, they wer examyned, and ther depositions written; and after none the same day arrayned before the protheest marshall, and capitaines, and ther, upon ther awne confessions, adjudged to die, and ymmediately twenty-five of them heeded, and oon hanged. Dyvers of the heedes of the principales, incontynentlie wer put upon the turrettes of the castell. We send your highness here inclosed theeff of ther depositions, amonges which there is a priste, which was privay with the traitor, deposeth that the Emperor promised

* In 1535, Easter day fell on the 28th of March, which fixes the date of this despatch.

to send hether, against your grace, 10,000 men, by the first day of Maye. And the kinge of Scottes promised to yeve aide to your rebell lykewise. We doo advertise your highnes therof, in discharge of our duties, to thintent serche may be made of the furdre circumstance therof; not doubting but if anny soche thinge be intendid by themperor, or kinge of Scottes, your highnes hath some intelligence therof, and will provide for it accordingly; for onles aide be sent hither from owtward parties, this traitor shalbe pursued to his adnoyance and destruction, to the best of our powers we trust to your grace's honor. Albeit thenhabitanntes of this lande have an. imagination and doubt, that he shulde hereafter obteyne your grace's pardone, as his antecessors, dyverse tymes, in lyke caases ded, which if, at anny tyme, he shulde, wer ther undoyng, as they say. The same causeth dyverse of theym to adhere to hym, and others not to doo soche service, as they ells wolde."*

The capture of Maynooth decided the fate of lord Thomas. By the aid of his friends in the west, he had collected a force of seven thousand men. Immediately on the report of this important success of the English, this army began to fall away, and he was soon reduced to a few hundreds: a force insufficient for any purpose but pillage. Even with this handful of men, the young Geraldine's spirit of infatuation did not yet desert him; obstinate to the last, he came into the vicinity of Clare. The lord deputy advanced to Naas: there he took one hundred and forty of the Irish. Presently being apprized that the lord Thomas was on his march to meet him, he very cruelly ordered them to be put to death. The rebels soon came in sight, but as a marsh, not to be crossed in the presence of an enemy, lay between, he directed a hot fire of artillery, which soon dispersed the remnant of their force. It was the last the unfortunate lord Thomas could bring together. Still, however, with a pertinacity which strongly shows the rashness and infatuation of his disposition, he persevered in hostilities which could have no object unless the pride of constancy in ill. He exerted himself to collect small parties, and carry on a desultory and marauding hostility. At Rathangan he caused a drove of cattle to be driven near the town to draw out the English: they fell into this trap. Believing the cattle to be a fair booty, numbers of the garrison came out unarmed to drive them in. The Geraldine party awaited their approach, until they came near their place of concealment, when they leaped forth, and few of the English escaped. On another occasion, he sent some of his people, disguised in the dress of English soldiers, to give information that his party were burning a village near Trim. On which the garrison in Trim sallied out, and, falling into an ambush, prepared for them, the greater part were slain.

The unfortunate youth soon retired into Munster; the pale and its vicinity were fast becoming unsafe for him. Lord Grey was sent after him; but no result could be looked for, from the weekly skirmishes in which a few rebels or soldiers were slain. Lord Thomas easily kept himself out of the reach of seizure, but it was become difficult for him

* State Papers, No. 87, page 236.

to live; and the crisis was arrived when he should either yield on terms, or be a hunted robber without means, or the prospect of a termination to his misfortunes. Under such circumstances, a parley was proposed, and lord Thomas surrendered to lord Grey at discretion, but implored his good offices with the king. Lord Grey carried him to Dublin, from whence he was embarked for England. He was confined in the Tower, where, it appears from the following letter that, his sufferings were very severe.

"Lord Thomas Fitz-Gerald to Rothe.

"My trusty servant, I hartely commend me unto you. I pray you that you woll delyver thys othyr letter unto Obryen. I have sent to hym for £20 starling, the which yff he take you (as I trust he woll), than I woll that you com over, and bryng it onto my lord Crumwell, that I may so have ytt. I never had eny mony syns I cam in to pryson, but a nobull, nor I have had nothyr hosyn, dublet, nor shoys, nor shyrt, but on; nor eny othyr garment, but a syngyll fryse gowne, for a velve furred wythe bowge, and so I have gone wolward, and barefote, and barelegyd, dyverse tymes (whan it hath not ben very warm); and so I shuld have don styll, and now, but that pore prysoners, of ther gentyl-nes, hathe sumtyme gevyn me old hosyn and shoys, and old shyrtes. This I write onto you, not as complaynyng on my fryndes, but for to show you the trewthe of my grete nede, that you shuld be the more dylygent in going onto Obryen, and in bryngyng me the before said £20, wherby I myght the soner have here mony to by me clothys, and also for to amend my sclender comyns and fare, and for othyr necessaries. I woll you take owte of that you bryng me for your costes and labur. I pray you to have me commendyd onto all my lovers and frendes, and show them that I am in gude helthe.*

"By me, THOMAS FITZ-GERALD.

(Superscribed) "To my trusty and well loved servant, John Rothe."

It appears that lord Thomas confidently anticipated mercy. But this anticipation must seem weak to the reader of the foregoing detail: his rebellion was sadly aggravated by the combination of circumstances. His father's character cast an unlucky reflection on the crimes and follies of a son who had thus impetuously rushed into rebellion. The monarch, who was justly incensed against the conduct of his father in a place of high authority and trust, was not likely to look with much indulgence on the commission of this trust to a rash youth of twenty-one; and from the frantic folly with which this youth flung all consideration of fidelity and duty aside, and rushed from the seat of honour, authority, rule, protection, and justice, to the downright betrayal of his father's honour, and his own trust, he could not be a safe person to represent the most powerful house in Ireland, nor would his pardon be the best example of royal mercy in such a time. Further, whether or not lord Thomas was a consenting party to the foul murder of archbishop Allen, so it was believed, and so ran the sentence of the Roman see, pronouncing him accursed for the crime. There were some high features of gene-

* State Papers, letter clviii. Vol. ii. p. 502.

rosity and heroism in his character, but he was a traitor in the eyes of justice, which does not, and cannot dive into men's motives, or weigh their secret virtues in the balance against their crimes perpetrated in the eye of day. In those evil times, in which the licence of great chiefs was the chief cause of the sufferings of the pale, it was rather the error of justice to be lenient; and the impunity of outrages like those of this unfortunate young lord, would be a fatal precedent in a country which had still to learn that murder and rebellion were not virtues but crimes.

The lord Thomas was arrested, on his way to Windsor, by order of the king; and on the 3d of February, 1537, he was executed at Tyburn, with five of his uncles.

In denying that his suffering has any claim on the historian's compassion, we must add, that the justice of that execrable tyrant by whom he was ordered to his fate, was probably the result of no purer principle than revenge. We cannot demand much of the reader's "valuable indignation" in behalf of good men who were hurried to an ignominious and unworthy end, four hundred years ago; their account has long been balanced, and posterity has troubles of its own. But nothing can throw a clearer light on the furious and bloodthirsty violence of Henry VIII., than the indiscriminate murder of five noble Geraldines, brothers to the ninth earl of Kildare. Of these, two were unquestionably guilty and met a just death, had it not been inflicted by the foulest treachery; but the other three were notoriously innocent, and opposed to the whole proceedings of their nephew. These lords were taken by a detestable artifice, and executed without trial, or even the form of inquiry. Lord Grey was commissioned to take them, he invited them to a feast, and from the feast they were transferred to the bloody scaffold. Three of them in the confidence of innocence, and the unconsciousness of a charge; all thinking the blow past, and the tyrant's vengeance appeased. The tyrant may, it is true, be said to have had some forecast in his fury; he asked his council if he might not now seize all the lands of the country into his own hands, and conquer the whole of it for himself. Fortunately, for the descendants of many a noble house, he was better advised. But his rage against the Geraldine branch of Kildare had been long kindling, and was not to be appeased by a sacrifice less than extermination. One only, a youth of twelve years, escaped, and with difficulty was saved from the vengeance of Henry. As this youth lived to act a very distinguished part in his own generation, we shall have to notice him further on.

James, Eleventh Earl of Desmond.

DIED A. D. 1529.

Of this powerful nobleman it will be enough to mention, that he lived in great power and wealth, apart from the politics, and remote from the power of the English government. These circumstances naturally operated on a proud and insubordinate spirit, and he entered into two treaties with the foreign enemies of England, which would have been fatal in their result to any other nobleman of the pale; but

from the penalties of which, Desmond was protected by his remote southern position, which reduced the power which the English deputies could exercise over his conduct, to something merely nominal. Of these rebellions, the first was in conjunction with the king of France, in 1523, and was terminated and detected by a peace made between Francis and Henry. The second was a similar correspondence with the emperor Charles V., who sent an ambassador to him to move him to rebellion. This embassy was, however, rendered abortive by the earl's death, in August, 1529. He was succeeded in the earldom by an uncle, who had been his enemy.

Edward, Fourth Lord Dunsany.

KILLED A.D. 1521.

THIS lord attended Gerald, eighth earl of Kildare, to the famous battle of Knocktow, in Connaught, in 1504; and was, in his own day, distinguished as a valiant warrior. He attended lord Surrey in his campaign, in 1521, in pursuit of O'Carrol and O'Connor, and contributed to the victory by his personal bravery; but, carried on by his military ardour, he ventured too far in the pursuit, and, being unsupported, was slain.

Cormac M'Carthy, Lord of Muskerry.

DIED A. D. 1536.

OUR notice of this ancient chief must be confined to a few authentic facts.

The family of which he was one, was among the most eminent in the south of Ireland, having extensive territories in Desmond. Antiquaries trace his pedigree through thirty-five descents to Oilíoll Olum, king of Munster in the 2d century. His father, Cormac Ladir, ruled as lord of Muskerry for forty years; during which, he built the castles of Blarney, Kilcrea, and Carricknamuck, with several abbeys and churches. He was fourth in descent from Cormac M'Carthy More, who probably died 1353 and was the chief of the M'Carthys in his own time. His direct representative, in the period of our present notice, ruled under the title of M'Carthy More, in Kerry, between Dingle bay and Kenmare river; and Cormac, the subject of this notice, was lord of Muskerry, in the county of Cork.

He is mentioned by Ware under the name of Cormac M'Carthy Reagh the younger, to distinguish him from M'Carthy Reagh of Carbery in the same county; and in the government correspondence he is frequently mentioned under the appellation of Cormac Oge.

Ware mentions the efforts of William Rokeby, archbishop of Dublin, and "other delegates," to make peace between Cormac and his powerful neighbour James, earl of Desmond, as having failed; as Desmond, while the negotiation was pending, invaded the country of Cormac,

which he burned and pillaged. Upon this, Cormac entered into confederacy with Thomas of Desmond, the earl's most inveterate enemy, and afterwards his successor in the earldom; with this aid, and that of M'Carthy of Carbery, he defeated the earl at Cluthar and Moor abbey, slaying 1440 foot, and 480 horse with three or four Fitz-Gerals, the earl's near kinsmen. Ware places this battle in 1521, but a note appended to the lord lieutenant's letter to the king, in the *State Papers*, shows very clearly, from a comparison of dates, and other circumstantial considerations, too slight to be extracted at length, that the battle took place in 1520.* In the letter here referred to, the consequences of such a victory are mentioned as the subject of apprehension. But it is added, that Cormac was, of all the Irishmen of the land, save O'Donel, the most inclined to "fall into English order."

This appears to be confirmed by the circumstances afterwards stated by Surrey, in a letter to the king, in which he mentions that the earl of Ormonde had brought his friends Cormac Oge, and M'Carthy of Carbery, who were "of his band;" and they then gave their pledges to keep the peace toward Desmond, and to be ordered by the lord lieutenant in all causes of contention which might arise between them. To this, Surrey adds his testimony to the good character of these M'Carthys. "They be two wise men, and I find them more conformable to good order, than some Englishmen here. I have motioned them to take their lands, and to hold them of the king's grace, and they will be content so to do, so they may be defended."†

He is shortly after mentioned by Surrey, as a "sad wise man," who was very desirous to become a subject. He also applied through the same channel, to be created a baron: but this desire does not appear to have received the notice it deserved from king Henry. Cormac's entire conduct was such as to prove a disposition to conform himself to the English laws, and to be on good terms with the deputy. Surrey mentions among the reasons for compliance with his application, "surely he is substantial of his promise, and, without any safeconduct, hath come to me tendering his service, and is very willing to conform himself to the English order." It had, indeed, become an obvious opportunity for the extension of the English jurisdiction, as this inclination was beginning to be very general; but it was not adopted, and the line of disunion from which so much evil had arisen was kept up long beyond the time when it might have been obliterated.

Cormac was, as we have stated, the friend and faithful ally of Ormonde. He was also connected with James the thirteenth earl of Desmond, who married his daughter. Another daughter of his was married to M'Carthy of Carbery, nephew to the earl of Kildare.

Cormac M'Carthy, in consequence of these alliances, is frequently mentioned as taking a prominent part in the military transactions of the English, and may, in this respect, be regarded as the most distinguished native of his time. He died in 1536.‡

In the beginning of the 14th century, a branch of this family migrated into Scotland, and spread into several illustrious families.

* State Papers, Vol. II. Part iii. p. 8.

† State Papers.

‡ *Ib.*, cxxxi. p. 332.

From one of these—George M'Cartney of Auchinleck, who, in 1649, removed into the land of his ancestors—descended the modern family of the lords M'Cartney, in the Irish peerage.

Alick de Burgh, First Earl of Clanricarde.

DIED A. D. 1544.

THIS nobleman was a distinguished person in his day. His services were, however, as well as the main incidents of his life, too local in their character to claim a place in this advanced period of our work. We notice him chiefly as the founder of the important provincial towns of Roscommon, Galway, Loughrea, Clare, Concashel, Ballyforwer, and Leitrim; which achievements, more valuable than glorious, and more permanent in their results than memorable in the record of history, may show the vast extent of this great lord's territories. He was seized in fee of Clanricarde, consisting of the baronies of Loughrea, Dunkellin, Kiltaragh, Clare, Athenry, and Leitrim. In 1543 he surrendered, and obtained a re-grant of these territories from Henry VIII., who, at the same time, created him earl of Clanricarde; conferring on him, many other grants and privileges. He died in the following year, leaving one son, Richard, his distinguished successor, whom we shall have to notice under the reign of queen Elizabeth.*

Pierce, Eighth Earl of Ormonde.

DIED A. D. 1539.

As the political history of the generation in which we are immediately engaged, has been sufficiently noticed in the life of the ninth earl of Kildare, and his unfortunate and guilty son, we may now confine ourselves within brief limits in the remaining contemporary lives. The incidents purely personal that remain to us, in the annals of the 16th century, are few; and of the most prosperous and greatest man, if he had but the discretion and virtue to avoid a life of rebellion, or party war, and a bloody death, there can be little said beyond the meagre notice of the herald's book.

We have already stated† how this nobleman and his lady, a sister of the ninth earl of Kildare, were reduced to a condition of the most deplorable privation, and compelled to conceal themselves in some lowly dwelling among the woods, till, driven by the complaints of his wife, and his sense of wrong, he surprised and slew the usurper, and thus regained his estates and honours.

His family had, by the result of a series of political events, most of which have been noticed under their proper heads, been depressed in power and party importance in Ireland. This disadvantage was to some extent, counterbalanced by court favour, and that social im-

* Lodge. Archdall.

† Life of Sir James Ormonde, p. 423.

portance which results from polished manners and liberal accomplishments; in which respect, the members of this illustrious race, appear constantly in advance of their times, and seem to have transmitted through many descents, a vein of more refined humanity, than the historian may otherwise trace in the 15th and 16th centuries. The earls of Ormonde were in these ages more frequently to be found high in the councils and favour of the English monarchs, while the two great branches of the Geraldines, present, on the other hand, a uniform affinity for the Irish habits, and a strong tendency to factious movements. Their position and vast possessions in part account for these tendencies; but on a lengthened comparison carried through many generations, the singular uniformity becomes observable; the immense pride—the reckless activity—the love of popularity—the insubordinate temper, breaking out with nearly similar results in each successive generation, and ripening into the same successes and disasters, appear to assume the character of family features. The opposite dispositions may be traced in the great rival race of the Butlers. They were, it is true, in common with all the illustrious persons of the period, rude in their knowledge, and inequitable in their notions of right; but they were refined beyond their age and country, and their faults were of the age, while their virtues were their own.

This earl was strongly urged by his lady, herself a Geraldine, to regain the political weight in Ireland, which his family had lost. But there was little hope of affecting this object by force of arms, or by the arts of Irish popularity. This earl was more versed in the ways of courts, than in the factions of the pale. He had, however, recourse to the weapons of a courtier, and we have seen the result in the history of his great but unfortunate rival.

When lord Surrey was sent over as lieutenant, the earl of Ormonde was active, efficient, and distinguished in promoting the success of his various expeditions against the O'Tooles, O'Carrol, and other native chiefs. His character is set in a strong point of view, by the friendship of Surrey, who appears to have relied on his counsel in all important matters, and to have set high value on his conversation. This is made evident by his many letters to the king, and to Wolsey, in which he freely praises his conduct, and shows anxiety for his interests. In a letter to Wolsey in 1520, he writes, "beseeching your grace to cause thankful letters to be sent from the king's grace to the earl of Ormonde, as well for his diligence showed unto me at all times, as also for that he showeth himself ever, with his good advice and strength, to bring the king's intended purpose to good effect. Undoubtedly he is not only a wise man, and hath a true English heart, but he is the man of most experience in the feats in war of this country, of whom I have at all times the best counsel of any in this land. I would the earl of Desmond were of like wisdom and order."* It is stated on strong authority, that although bearing the title of Ormonde, he was not fully recognised as such, until 1528, although in the patent by which he was appointed lord deputy of Ireland, dated 6th March, 1522, he was denominated "Petrus Butteler comes Ormonde," without qualification.†

* State Papers, xiii. 58.

† Ib., iv. 38.

He was, during the time of Surrey's administration, involved in a party war with the earl of Desmond, and great efforts were made by government for their reconciliation.

The most remarkable incident to be noticed in the life of this earl, is perhaps the treaty which was for some time in agitation for the marriage of his son with Anna Boleyn, the daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn, and afterwards the unfortunate queen of Henry VIII., and mother of queen Elizabeth. Happy had it been for the lady, at least, had this treaty been carried into effect. The subject appears to have occupied considerable attention; it is thus mentioned in a communication to Wolsey, from Surrey and his council: "And where, at our being with your grace, divers of us moved you to cause a marriage to be solemnized between the earl of Ormonde's son, being with your grace and Sir Thomas Boleyn's daughter. We think, if your grace caused that to be done, and a final end to be made between them, for the title of lands depending in variance, it should cause the said earl be better willed to see this land brought to good order."* The variance here alluded to, was one of long standing, and arose from the circumstance of Thomas, seventh earl of Ormonde, having had two daughters, and no male issue; in consequence of this, his large English estates, £30,000 a-year, according to the present value of lands, went to his two daughters, while his Irish estates went with his title to the male heir. The parties were not, however, themselves, satisfied about their rights; one of the co-heirs married Sir William Boleyn, who seems to have thought himself entitled to the Irish properties and honours. The marriage was approved by the earl; but did not, as the reader is aware, take place. The dispute was shortly after settled by a compromise. Sir Thomas Boleyn was created earl of Ormonde, and earl Pierce received the title of Ossory. About ten years after, on the death of Sir Thomas without issue, the title of Ormonde was restored to the earl of Ossory.

When Surrey, after remaining two years in the Irish government, was recalled, the earl of Ossory was, by his recommendation, appointed lord deputy. His conduct was such as to obtain for him in 1524 the office of lord treasurer, in Ireland. In 1528, he was again elected lord deputy by the council, and received many valuable testimonies of approbation also from the king. In 1537, he received a grant in confirmation of his extensive Irish estates to himself and heirs. The estates mentioned in this give some notion of his wealth. Among other estates, were the names of Gowran, Knockfert, Knocktopher, Kilkenny, Glashan, Carrick, Thurles, Nenagh, Roscrea, &c. &c.†

This earl was distinguished for his manly and honourable dispositions, which were generally respected; he was sagacious, and firm in council; a pleasing companion in private society, and a brave warrior in the field. He deserved the high praise of having exerted himself successfully for the improvement of the manners and condition of his people about Kilkenny, at a time when other eminent lords only thought of augmenting their estates and retaining power by unprincipled faction, and sanguinary wars. In conformity with this good disposition,

* State Papers.

† Lodge.

the earl of Ormonde was exemplary for the zeal and devotion of his religious observances. It is told of him, that every year, for a fortnight previous to Easter, he retired for the purpose of self-examination and holy exercise, to prepare himself for the reception of the sacrament at that festival.

It must be admitted, that in the long and angry contests between him and the earl of Kildare, he was not behind that earl in hostility; but it was a time when there was no choice between these fierce, and not very elevated contests of faction, and the total abandonment of every right. The following letter to his son, lord Butler, then with the king, may convey some notion of his own view of his position, and is otherwise of interest:—

“Ormonde to lord Butler.

“In my loving maner I recomende me unto you, and lately hath had relacion, that certain of the counsaill, by the deputies meanes, have written over thider, to have the kinges letters addressed to me, prohibiting me to take any Irishe mens part. Whereupon, ye most ever have good, secret, and diligent espyall, lest the kinges letters be so optayned, whiche then wold not oonly bee grete prejudice to me, and to you in tyme comyng, but also great discourag to all myne adherentes to continue any amytie to me, or you hereafter. Now, ye may perceive the parcialtie of theym, that so certified, being ordred and conducted therein, as the deputie wolde have theym; and during my being in thauctoritie, they never certified any of therl of Kildares apparaunt mysorder, or transgression, in any maner. Shewe the kinges grace, and my lord cardynall, of the soden wilfull invasion doon by the deputie upon O’Kerole, long after the date of the kinges letters now directed; wherof I have rather certified you by a frere of mowskery. Whereupon ye must devise in my name, to the king and my lord cardinall, as my trusty servaunt, Robert Couley, shall penn and endite.

“As for thindentures, they bee enfrenge by the deputie, and in maner no point observed; and as for my parte, I will justifie, I have truly observed theym, to my gret losses, in suffring my adherentes and servauntes distruccions. The deputie, now afore Ester, did set suche coyn and liverie in the 3 obedyent sheres, that mervaille it were to here two litell townes of myne, called Castell Warning, and Oghterarde, with any other towne, did bere 420 galloglas. For 4 myles the poor tenauntes be so empoverysshed, that they cannot paye my rentes, and the landes like to bee clere wast. Now, lately he hath sente out of the eschequier a writ to Waterforde, that all maires and bailliffes, that were there sens the furst yere of our souverain lord that now is, shold appere in 15 P^a* to geve accompt, before the barons, for al maner the king duties, revenues, and poundage there; whiche is doon for a cantell to put me to losses and my heires. For Waterford hath a sufficient discharge, but oonly for my halff of the prises, and the £10 annuite, with the 20 markes to the churche; and as for the price, and £10 of annuite, I must see theym discharged. Wherefore, ye must

* Quindena Pascha.

labour to gette an especiall patent of the king of all the prises in this land, according to my graunte, made to myne anncesters by his most noble progenitours, and specially in Waterford, and the £10 of annuitie, without any accompt-making; with this clause, "absque aliquo compoto," &c. If it bee not had, it will be moche prejudice to you in tyme commying; for this is doon to dryve you ever from the principall wyne, and the said annuitie, and not to have your prises till ye have a discharge out of theschequer, from tyme. In any wise, slepe not this matier, and if ye do, the most losses and trouble wil be yours in tyme commying. Immediat upon the receipt herof sende for Robert Couly, and cause hym to seche remedies for the same; and, if James White bee not commying, let hym endeavor hymself to obteigne it. Furthermore, I desire you to make diligent hast hyther with the kinges licence; for surely, onles I see your tyme better employed in attendance of my great busynes, then ye have doon hither, I wolbe well avised, or I do sende you any more to your costes.

"Written at Kilkenny, the 22d daye of April.*
(Superscribed) "To my son, James Butler, with the kings grace in England."

This illustrious earl died in 1539, and was buried in St Canice's church, Kilkenny.

Con O'Nial, First Earl of Tyrone.

DIED A. D. 1558.

THE name of O'Nial has a place of no mean distinction in every chapter of the history of Ireland. But it is the main difficulty of the present portion of our labour, that while events, scarcely historical in their nature, are crowded together on every page, we have, on the contrary, a lamentable absence of all the personal detail which might be looked for among records so minute and frivolous, that they seem rather to be the material for personal than for national history. The descendants of these renowned Irish kings, the heroes of the poets and chroniclers of our first period, appear in the subsequent periods as the actors in some slight transaction, or persons of some curious tale, and disappear without any satisfactory trace of their previous or subsequent course. It is mostly, only from the change of name, that it is to be inferred, that the father has died and the son succeeded. This obscurity, instead of diminishing, increases as we advance to later ages; so that it is easier to give the full details of the history of the hero of the nine hostages than of his descendant, who flourished among the sons of little men at an interval of thirty generations.

In every reign, the representative of the Tyrone O'Nials, is found among the more powerful opponents of the pale. Often the leaders of formidable insurrections of the native forces; often yielding and swearing fealty; often again in arms, and among the enemies or pensioned

* State Papers, Letter xl. p. 118.

protectors of the pale. They assume, however, in the reign of Henry VII., a new character, by their alliance with the princely house of Kildare. As the authentic portion of the family history of this race is confined to notices insufficient for the purpose of biography, we shall here mention a few particulars about some of the immediate ancestors of the first earl of Tyrone. Con O'Niall was married to the sister of the eighth earl of Kildare; and, from the time of that great man's elevation to the administration of Irish affairs, he gave his powerful support to the English. He was, in 1492, murdered by his brother, Henry, who, in turn, was murdered, in 1498, by the sons of his victim, Con and Tirlogh. This Tirlogh was thus raised to his father's rights. In 1501, he had a battle with the Scots, near Armagh, whom he defeated, slaying about sixty soldiers,* and four captains. "A son," says Ware, "of the laird of Aig, of the family of the MacDonnells, and four sons of Colley MacAlexander." As this battle was on Patrick's day, it is doubtful how far it can be properly regarded as an affair of enmity. We find no account of the death of this chief: but he was succeeded, within a few years by Art O'Niall, whom we find receiving aid from the earl of Kildare, in 1509, when he was seized and imprisoned by the rival branch of the O'Nialls. Of Art we have nothing very memorable to tell: he died in 1519, and was succeeded by his brother, Con Boccagh, who was raised by popular election. This chief was not long at the head of his sept, when Thomas Howard, earl of Surrey, was sent to Ireland as deputy, in 1520. Con was, at the time, engaged in an incursion into Meath; but, hearing that Surrey was on his march against him with an overwhelming force—a thousand English, and the select men of Dublin—he became discouraged, and retreated into Ulster. Thither Surrey did not think fit to pursue him, as he was quite unprovided for so prolonged a campaign; and he therefore returned to Dublin. O'Niall, however, clearly saw, that he had not himself any force to be relied on, if the English governor should think fit to follow into the north; with this feeling, he sent letters to Surrey, offering entire submission, on the condition of being taken into favour; and offering to serve the king faithfully. To this Surrey agreed; he had, indeed, little if any choice. O'Niall was not aware of the penurious means allowed for the maintenance of the Irish government, by Henry VIII. The celebrated field of the cloth of gold, was held in the same year, with all its well known circumstances of lavish cost; but the liberality of Henry was confined to his pleasures, and his love of ostentation. There was, however, good reason to fear the wisdom and military talent of Surrey, who, notwithstanding his difficulties contrived in August 1520 to march into O'Niall's country, on which O'Niall came in, with other Irish chiefs of the north, and submitted; or as king Henry describes it in his own communication to Surrey, "according to their natural duty of allegiance, have recognised us as their sovereign lord," &c. Sir John Wallop had been sent over with this intelligence to the king, who in answer states to Surrey, the advice of his council upon the government of Ireland, that the Irish chiefs should be dealt with by "sober waies, politique drifts, and amiable perswasions, rather than by

* Cox.

rigorous dealing, comminations, or any other enforcement by strength or violence; and, to be plaine unto you, to spende so moche money for the reduccion of that lande, to bring the Irishry in apparannce oonely of obeisannce, &c., &c., it were a thing of less policie, less advantage, and lesse effect.”*

It is more to our present purpose that we find in the same letter a direction to lord Surrey to knight O’Nial, “and other such lords of the Irishry, as ye shall thinke goode.”† A complaint seems to have soon after (1521) been made to the English court, of O’Nial, representing him as engaged in a formidable conspiracy for the destruction of the English, by the aid of a Scottish force; and urging, as the only resource against this, the necessity of a strong English force being sent over. It was answered in the paper of instructions sent over by the king, that the king’s engagements to foreign powers, and his “manifolde quarrels with France, made it inconvenient.” This is, however, followed by a letter from the king, in which he states, that having caused all inquiry to be made in Scotland, and for other reasons assigned, there is no ground for any apprehension of immediate hostility from O’Nial. It appears certain from the same document, that O’Nial had expressed his gratitude to the king himself for the honours conferred upon him; and the probability, suggested by every gleam we can obtain of his personal conduct, is, that he became a true if not a zealous supporter of the English. In 1523, he appears bearing the sword of state before the lord deputy.

In 1525, O’Nial became involved in a war with Manus O’Donell; he was assisted by his kinsman, the lord deputy; but while engaged in an incursion in O’Donell’s lands, his own was invaded by Hugh O’Nial, the chief of the rival house. On this they concluded a peace with O’Donell, and marched against Hugh O’Nial, whom they defeated and slew.‡

A very few years after, Con O’Nial seems to have been engaged in opposition to the English of the pale; and, in 1532, committed devastations which considerably injured his kinsman, the earl of Kildare, who was then deputy and was suspected of having contemned this conduct. Two years after, he engaged in the disturbances, which have been already detailed in the life of the deputy’s son—so well known under the appellation of Silken Thomas. By his conduct in the “Rebellion of Silken Thomas,” he drew upon himself the especial attention of deputy lord Grey, in 1539, when his territories were invaded and sustained severe loss.

It was in the year 1538, that the peace of lord deputy Grey’s administration was disturbed by the very energetic efforts of the Roman see against the progress of the reformation. Of these, we shall speak fully, under a more appropriate head. Our present purpose is to mention a communication from that see to O’Nial. A Franciscan friar, who was sent over for the purpose of exciting the native chiefs to arms, was seized. Among his papers was found the following letter written in the name of the council of cardinals by the bishop of Metz:—

* Letter from Henry VIII. to Surrey.—*State Papers.*

† *Ib.* p. 66.

‡ Cox. Ware.

"MY SON, O'NIALL,

"Thou and thy fathers were ever faithful to the mother church of Rome. His holiness, Paul, the present pope, and his council of holy fathers, have lately found an ancient prophecy of one saint Legerianus, an Irish archbishop of Cashel. It saith, that the church of Rome shall surely fall when the Catholic faith is once overthrown in Ireland. Therefore, for the glory of the mother church, the honour of St Peter, and your own security, suppress heresy, and oppose the enemies of his holiness. You see that when the Roman faith perisheth in Ireland, the see of Rome is fated to utter destruction. The council of cardinals have, therefore, thought it necessary to animate the people of the holy island in this pious cause, being assured, that while the mother church hath sons of such worth as you, and those who shall unite with you, she shall not fall, but prevail for ever—in some degree at least—in Britain. Having thus obeyed the order of the sacred council, we recommend your princely person to the protection of the Holy Trinity, of the Blessed Virgin, of St Peter, St Paul, and all the host of heaven. Amen."

O'Niall, already irritated by the lord deputy's warfare upon his territory, and easily inflamed by representations so adapted to his character—which did not fail to reach him through many efficient channels—entered with violence into the views suggested by the Romish emissaries. He was joined by Manus O'Donell, and many other of the native chiefs. The clergy exerted themselves to the utmost of their power to inflame the pride of the chiefs, and the passions of all; and a strong confederacy was quickly raised. At the head of the formidable insurrection thus levied, Con O'Niall marched into the pale, committing ravage, and denouncing vengeance against the enemies of St Peter, and the chiefs of the holy island. Their hostilities terminated in destruction and plunder. Halting near Tara, O'Niall reviewed his numerous forces; after which they separated to their provinces congratulating themselves on an amount of spoil, which in their eyes constituted victory over their enemies.

In the mean time, lord Grey, though unprepared either to repel or take advantage of this inroad, was not idle. He collected his force, far disproportioned in number, but still more preponderant in material. He obtained a small reinforcement from England—the citizens of Dublin and of Drogheda flocked with ready zeal to his standard—and the inhabitants of the pale, whose resentment and scorn had been excited by the depredations and unwarlike conduct of O'Niall and his confederacy, showed more than their usual alacrity in contributing their exertions for their own defence.

When joined by Sir William Brereton, lord Grey led his army into Meath where he came up with a considerable body of the Irish insurgents, on the banks of a river at a place called Bellahoe. There was danger and difficulty in passing, but little in routing the host of Irish chiefs. The accounts of these encounters, though sufficiently authentic as to the main result, are yet too perplexed in most of their incidents to enable us to offer any detail that we feel to be satisfactory.

O'Niall appears to have pursued a temporizing course, the policy of which was to gain time and ward off immediate consequences, by

professions, treaties, and pledges, to which he attached no weight and which deceived nobody who knew the Irish chiefs; they were yet entertained with some appearance of trust by the English court, and also gave a temporary pretext to his supporters and friends. When he possessed the means of resistance he respected no pledges; but when discomfited, his ready refuge was submission. Hence, the numerous treaties and the broken appointments, which it would be alike tedious and unprofitable to particularize. In the year we have been noticing, we are enabled to ascertain from the correspondence published by the State Paper committee,* that he occupied a large share of the attention of government, of which the above remarks will be found to be a faithful description. We, therefore, pass to the year 1542, when a more decided turn in the course of this powerful chief's life took place.

In a letter, dated the 24th August, 1542, the lord deputy and council acquaint the king that O'Nial had come to Dublin offering to go to England to visit the king, if they would supply him with money for the purpose; and affirming his own entire want of means, and adding, that "considering his good inclinations which were beyond all men's expectation," they would endeavour to supply him for this important purpose. O'Nial made his visit, and was most graciously received; his arrival was, however, preceded by a communication, expressive of due penitence for all his past offences, with strong professions of submission for the time to come. Asking pardon, and "refusing my name and state, which I have usurped upon your grace, against my duty, and requiring your majesty of your clemency to give me what name, state, title, land, or living, it shall please your highness; which I shall acknowledge to take and hold of your majesty's mere gift, and in all things do hereafter, as shall beseem your most true and faithful subject."

King Henry created him earl of Tyrone, and gave him the "country of Tyrone." The patent limits the earldom to Con O'Nial for life, with remainder to his son Matthew intail male. Matthew was by the same instrument created baron Duncannon. This Matthew was an illegitimate son; and his right of succession was forcibly disputed by other members of the family, which disturbed the old age of his father, and renewed the troubles of the country. A paper written by the secretary Wriothesly is quoted in the volume of *State Papers*, from which we have chiefly drawn this notice, gives some curious details of O'Nial's investiture. "A paper remains in the hand-writing of secretary Wriothesly, noting the presents to be made to O'Nial on this occasion, among which were robes of state, and a gold chain of the value of £100. And it appears by the register of the privy council, that the earl of Oxford was summoned to attend the king at Greenwich, on Sunday, 1st of October, to make a sufficient number of earls for O'Nial's investiture to that dignity; and, that as a further mark of favour, Mr Wiatt and Mr Tuke were, on the 3d of October, appointed to conduct the earl of Tyrone, [&c. &c.] on the morrow to do their duties to the young prince Edward." The earl, on this occasion, renounced the name and style of O'Nial, engaged that he and his

* State Papers, from 1538 to 1540, Vol. ii.—State Papers, vol. ii. Paper ccclxxix.

followers should assume the English dress, manners, customs, and language, and submit to English law. This arrangement may evidently be looked on as the commencement of a most important revolution in the state of Ireland; as it was followed by a like submission under all the same conditions on the part of other great chiefs, whom the gracious reception experienced by O'Niall encouraged to pursue a course, of which the honour and advantage was now becoming yearly more and more apparent. The course of events had been, during the whole of the reign of Henry, such as to show that sooner or later all pertinacious opposition to the progress of English dominion must be swept away; and although, as ever happens, the bulk of proprietors and petty chiefs looked no further than the shape and colour of the passing moment, sagacious or informed persons, whose means of knowledge were more extensive, saw and acted on the principle of securing themselves against changes likely to come. The dream of regaining a barbarian independence was roughly shaken.

The new earl—and he was at the time at the head of the native chiefs, for power and possession—was on his return sworn of the privy council in Ireland. O'Brien, O'Donell, Ulich de Burgho, and Desmond, soon followed, made the same renunciations, and received the same favours.

The next occurrence, of sufficient moment for notice, exhibits the advantageous operation of these arrangements, upon the state of the chiefs who had thus submitted. The earl of Tyrone, and some others among the Ulster chiefs, having fallen into disputes amongst themselves, instead of entering on a brawling war to decide their difference by the plunder and murder of their dependents, they came up to Dublin to lay their complaints before the lord lieutenant and council.

The earl of Tyrone seems, however, to have fallen under suspicion not long after. In 1551 (5 Ed. VI.), he was detained in Dublin for some months by lord lieutenant Crofts, on the apprehension of disturbances in Ulster. It is evident that the ties of ancient habit and hereditary pride must have long retained an influence beyond the force of any other; but the earl was now become an old man, and probably felt the civilizing influence of that prudent season of life. Younger hands, too, were already grasping for his honours and possessions; and the growing force of British law must have assumed the aspect of a shelter and security against the unregulated violence of native ambition and turbulence. The occasion of the earl's embarrassment with the lord lieutenant, was in fact the result of contention among his descendants, and the unjust and dangerous disposition which he had made of the succession to the inheritance. Matthew, lord Duncannon, his recognised heir, was not only an illegitimate son; but common rumour, and the general opinion of the people, had long questioned his paternity, and it was said that he was the son of a smith. Indignant at a preference so questionable, the legitimate sons of the earl began to plot against the baron Duncannon, and soon succeeded in estranging from him the affection of the earl. Duncannon conceived the safest and surest resource would be to make common cause with the government. For this purpose he complained to the lord lieutenant.

ant, assuring him that his father and his brothers were leagued with the hope of throwing off their allegiance to the king, and re-asserting their independence. Upon this it was, that the earl was detained in close custody in Dublin. The other sons flew to arms, and attacked the lands of Matthew lord Duncannon, which they plundered and laid waste. Matthew was assisted by the English; but the deputy, in reliance upon the Irish lord's force, sent insufficient aid. The consequence was, a defeat sustained in an encounter with the brothers, John and Hugh, with a loss of two hundred slain. The war, (if we may so name it,) was, however, long kept up, and we shall have to notice its consequences under another head.

The earl of Tyrone does not further appear in any important transaction. This contention in his family clouded the prosperity of his latter days. He seems to have rested his affections on Matthew, baron Duncannon, who, it is probable, was not his son; and it was with impatient resentment he witnessed the successful encroachment of John O'Neill, whose active and turbulent disposition allowed no rest to Ulster. At length, having contrived to seize the person of Matthew, he put him to death. The old earl, who had put his whole heart into the contest, died of the shock.

Murrough O'Brien, First Earl of Thomond, and Baron Inchiquin. .

DIED A. D. 1551.

AMONG the great Irish chiefs who joined in surrendering their claim to native dignities and to ancient hereditary tenures and privileges, which it became at this period both unsafe and inexpedient to retain, none can be named more illustrious, either by descent or by the associations of a name, than Murrough O'Brien. There was none also among these chiefs to whom the change was more decidedly an advantage. The O'Briens of Thomond had, more than any of the other southern chiefs, suffered a decline of consequence and power, under the shadow of the great house of Desmond—with which they were at continual variance, and of which it had for many generations been the family policy to weaken them by division or oppression. It is mentioned by Lodge in his *Collectanea*,* that it was the custom of the Desmond lords to take part with the injured branches of the O'Briens, with a view to weaken the tribe; and, in the middle of the sixteenth century, the house of Desmond was the first in Ireland for the extent of its territories, and the influence derived from numerous and powerful alliances.

Murrough O'Brien had obtained possession of the principality of Thomond by a usurpation, justified by the pretence of the ancient custom of tanistry, by which it was understood that the succession was determined by a popular election of the most worthy. By this ancient custom, so favourable to the strong, Murrough set aside his nephew,

* Quoted by Archdall.

whose loss, however, he compensated, by resigning to him the barony of Ibrackan. The possession thus obtained by a title, which had long been liable to be defeated by means similar to those by which it was acquired, he prudently secured by a precaution, at this time rendered effective by the policy of the English administration, and countenanced by the example of his most eminent native countrymen.

He submitted to the lord deputy, who advised him to proceed to England. In pursuance of this advice, O'Brien repaired to England, and made the most full renunciation of his principality, and all its appurtenant possessions, privileges, and dignities, into the hands of the king. He further agreed and bound himself to renounce the title of O'Brien—to use whatever name the king should please to confer—to adopt the English dress, language, and customs. He also engaged to cultivate his lands—build houses, and let them to proper tenants who might improve the land—to renounce all cess or other exaction, and keep no armed force without the express permission of the deputy. He further covenanted to be obedient to the king's laws, to answer to his writs, and aid his governors according to the requisition. He was to hold his lands by a single knight's fee. There is among the *State Papers*, published in 1834, one which purports to contain an abridgment of the "requests" of O'Brien and some of the other chiefs associated with him in this transaction. The following is the part relative to O'Brien:—

"First, he demandeth to him and to his heirs male, all such lands, rents, reversions, and services, as I had at any time before this day, or any other [person] to my use, which is named part of Thomond, with all rule and authority to govern all the king's subjects, and to order them in defence of the said country, according to the king's laws, and with all royalty thereto belonging; reserving to the king's majesty the gift of all bishopricks, and all other things to the crown or regality appertaining.

"Where the council of Ireland hath given him certain abbeyes lately suppressed, he requireth the confirmation of that gift by the king's majesty, to him and to his heirs male.

"Item. That the laws of England may be executed in Thomond, and the haughty laws and customs of that country may be clearly put away for ever.

"Item. That bastards from henceforth may inherit no lands, and that those which at this present do inherit may enjoy the same during their lives, and after their death to return to the right heirs lawfully begotten.

"Item. That there may be sent into Ireland, some well learned Irishmen, brought up in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, not being infected with the poison of the bishop of Rome, and to be first approved by the king's majesty, and then to be sent to preach the word of God in Ireland.

"Item. Some place of small value near Dublin, where he may prepare for his horses and folkis, if he shall be commanded to resort to parliament or council at Dublin."*

Such were generally the demands made by O'Brien, of which we

* State Papers, cccxciii. vol. iii.

have already mentioned the result. He was created earl of Thomond, with remainder to his nephew Donogh O'Brien, whom he had dispossessed by the law of tanistry, but who must, in the eye of English law, have been looked on as one defrauded of his right. As, however, this arrangement could not be quite satisfactory to Murrough, he was at the same time created baron Inchiquin, with remainder to the heirs of his body.

We have already given an extract descriptive of the ceremony of the creation of those Irish earls: a more detailed description which we have since met will not be thought superfluous by the reader who is curious upon the subject of ancient manners:—

“First, The queen's closet at Greenwich was richly hanged with cloth of Arras, and well strawed with rushes. And after the king's majesty was come into his closet to hear high mass, these earls and the baron aforesaid, [Murrough O'Brien, Donogh O'Brien, and William de Burgh] went to the queen's closet, and thereafter saeing of high mass put on their robes of estate, and ymediately after, the king's majesty being under the cloth of estate, with all his noble council, with other noble persons of his realm, as well spiritual as temporal, to a great number, and the ambassadours of Scotland, the earl of Glencairn, Sir George Douglas, Sir William Hamilton, Sir James Leyremonthe, and the secretary for Scotland, came in the earl of Tomonde, led between the earls of Derby and the earl of Ormonde, the viscount Lisle, bearing before him his sword, the hilt upwards, Gartier before him bearing his letters patent, and so proceeded to the king's majestie. And Gartier delivered the said letters patentis to the lord chamberlain, and the lord chamberlain delivered them to the great chamberlain, and the lord great chamberlain delivered them to the king's majesty, who took them to Mr Wriothesly, secretary, to reade them openly. And when he came to “*Cincturam gladii*,” the viscount Lisle presented to the king the sword, and the king girded the said sword about the said earl bawdrickwise, the foresaid earl kneeling, and the lords standing that lead him. [This ceremony was repeated for the next earl, Clanrikard.] That done, came into the king's presence the baron [Donogh O'Brien, the nephew] in his kirtle, led between two barons, the lord Cobham, and the lord Clinton; the lord Montjoye bearing before him his robe, Gartier bearing before him his letters patents in the manner aforesaid, &c., &c. [the king handing these to Mr Paget to read out], and when he came to “*Investimus*,” he put on his robe. And so the patent read out, the king's majesty put about every one of their necks a chain of gold with a crosse hanging at it, and took then their letters patent, and they gave thanks unto him. And then the king's majestie made five of the men that came with them knights. And so the earls and the baron in order, took their leave of the king's highness, and were conveyed, bearing their letters patent in their hands to the council chamber, underneath the king's majesty's chamber, appointed for their dining place, in order as hereafter followeth: the trumpets blowing before them, the officers of armes, the earl of Thomond led between the earl of Derby and the viscount Lisle, &c., &c., to the dining place. After the second course, Gartier proclaimed their styles in manner following:—

"*Du Treshault [tres haut] et puissant Seigneur Moroghe O'Brien, Conte de Tomond, Seigneur de Insewyne, du royaume de Irlande, &c., &c.* The king's majestie gave them their robes of estate, and all things belonging thereunto, and paid all manner of duties belonging to the same."^{*}

This earl was in the same year sworn of the privy council. He married a daughter of Thomas Fitz-Gerald, the knight of the valley. He died 1551, and was succeeded in the barony of Inchiquin by his eldest son, according to the limitations of his patent, while the earldom went, by the same provisions, to his nephew's family.

Bernard Fitz-Patrick, Second Baron Upper Ossory.

DIED A. D. 1550, OR A. D. 1551.

THE reader of ancient Irish history may recollect to have met the name of M'Gil Patrick, prince of Upper Ossory, among the most valiant opponents of the first settlers in the 12th century. A still earlier recollection carries us back to the famous field of "Ossory's plain," where the ancient warriors of Munster were crossed upon their homeward march from the battle of Clontarf, by Magilla-Patrick and his men, and subdued their generous enemies with the noblest display of heroism that history records.[†]

The grandfather of the baron who is the subject of this notice, is also commemorated by an amusing anecdote, which is repeated by all the Irish historians. In 1522, this chief sent an ambassador to Henry VIII. with a complaint against Pierce, earl of Ormonde. The ambassador met king Henry on his way to chapel, and delivered his errand in the following uncouth sentence: "*Sta pedibus, Domine Rex! Dominus meus Gillapatricius me misit ad te et jussit dicere, quod si non vis castigare Petrum Rufum, ipse faciet bellum contra te.*"

The son of this chief, Barnard Fitz-Patrick, made his submission in 1537, to the commissioners of Henry VIII. They entered into indentures with him to make him baron of Cowhill, or Castleton, with a grant of the lands of Upper Ossory, at the annual rent of three pounds to the king, which agreement was carried into effect by a patent, dated 11th June, 1541. His first wife was a daughter of Pierce, earl of Ormonde, the "*Petrum Rufum*" of his father's complaint. By her he left a son, Barnaby, who succeeded him as second earl; and who was eminently distinguished for bravery, and for his prudent and honourable conduct as a public man.

This nobleman was the distinguished friend and favourite of Edward VI., who wrote him many affectionate letters, still extant, while he was in France, where he served as a volunteer in the king of France's army. Afterwards, when he returned from France, he signalized his valour in England, in Wyatt's insurrection; and in 1558 was knighted

^{*} State Papers. Note to paper cccxcvi. [†] Page 218 of this volume.

by the duke of Norfolk for his distinguished services at the siege of Leith.

An extract from a letter of the lord deputy Sidney to the Irish council, written while he was at Waterford, affords an honourable testimony of this lord: "Upper Ossorie is so well governed and defended by the valour and wisdom of the baron that now is, as—saving for surety of good order hereafter in succession—it made no matter if the county were never shired, nor her majestie's writ otherwise current than it is, so humbly he keepeth all his people subject to obedience and good order."* Under this impression, so honourable to the lord of Upper Ossory, the lord deputy made him lord lieutenant of the King's and Queen's counties, and the neighbouring country; throughout which the same good order was preserved, so that the turbulent chiefs of those districts were thoroughly repressed.

One of those chiefs whose insurrectionary sallies he had for many years controlled, Rory Oge O'More, having burnt Naas and other towns, was proclaimed by the government. As the baron of Upper Ossory was his most formidable foe, this chief made a characteristic effort to destroy him: he sent a person to the baron, who pretended to give him private information of the movements of O'More, and described the place where he might be surprised with a large prey and a small force, among the woods. The baron knew the rebel chief's character, and the ways of the country, and suspected the truth. The information was not, however, to be neglected, so he took with him a strong party, and when he approached the woods, he sent in thirty men to try the way. O'More seeing this, thought to mask his real force by appearing with an equal number, leaving the rest of his men in ambush. This well devised manœuvre was, however, defeated by the impetuosity of the baron's men, who instantly charged the enemy and scattered them; in the confusion O'More received a sword through his body, and was despatched. The reward of a thousand marks had been offered for O'More's head; this sum was offered to the baron by the council, but he refused to accept more than one hundred marks as a reward for his men. This occurrence happened in 1578.

In the following year, the baron attended the lord deputy into Munster against James Fitz-Maurice; in consideration of which, Lodge tells us, he received a pension with other compensations which showed a high sense of his services. Sir Henry Sidney, in his instructions to his successor, lord Grey, mentions the baron of Upper Ossory, with a few more, as "the most sufficient and faithful" persons he found in Ireland.

This baron died 1581, leaving a daughter only; on which his title and estates passed to his brother Florence, to whom he also left by will all his "wyle stode," "his armour, shirts of mail, and other furniture of war, saving that which served for both the houses of Borriedge and Killenye, which, after his wife's decease or marriage, he wills to remain for the furniture of those two castles constantly. He leaves to him likewise half his pewter and brass; all his tythes in Ossory (except those of Aghavol bequeathed to his wife), all the plate left him by his father," &c., &c.†

* Quoted by Lodge.

† Lodge.

Sir William Brabazon.

DIED A. D. 1552.

IN August, 1534, Sir William Brabazon was appointed vice-treasurer and receiver-general of Ireland; and was for the eighteen years following the most distinguished person there for his eminent services, and his brave and steady conduct in various trying situations.

In 1535, he distinguished himself greatly by his resistance to the destructive proceedings of lord Thomas Fitz-Gerald, in the country round Naas. Allen and Aylmer, in a joint letter* to Cromwell, mention that but for Brabazon's conduct on that occasion, the whole country from Naas to the gates of Dublin, had been burnt; "which had been a loss in effect irrecoverable."

The following year, O'Connor Faly made a destructive inroad upon Carbery, in the county of Kildare, but was at once checked by Sir William Brabazon and the chancellor, who marched into Offaly, where they committed equal devastation in the lands of O'Connor who was thus compelled to return home, on which a peace was presently concluded.

In 1539, Brabazon was, with the chancellor and master of the rolls, appointed a commissioner for receiving the surrenders of the abbey, and the granting of the necessary pensions for the maintenance of the abbots and fraternities by whom they were surrendered. And in 1543, he was appointed lord justice. At this time the king's style was altered from lord to king of Ireland, and the new official seals were sent through him to the respective officers by whom they were held.

He was again called to the government in 1546, and maintained his character by successful expeditions in which he reduced a dangerous combination of O'More and O'Connor Faly, whose territories he laid waste, forcing O'Connor to seek refuge in Connaught.

On the accession of Edward VI., being nominated of the Irish privy council, at the special desire of that king, who, at the same time, expressed his sense of his long and eminent service, Brabazon suggested the effective repair and occupation of the castle of Athlone, and had the charge of this measure, so important to the province of Connaught, committed to himself. The military importance of this place had been recognised so early as the reign of John, when the castle is said to have been built. Standing on the only part of the Shannon, where this river is fordable for thirty miles; and commanding the territories on either side, this town obviously presented the most important advantages for a magazine, and central position in the western country. Under Brabazon, repairs were made, and additions, which were continued in the reign of Elizabeth. This service was rendered difficult by the strenuous opposition of the neighbouring Connaught chiefs.

In 1549, Brabazon was again called to the head of the Irish go-

* State Papers, Paper xcv. p. 260.

vernment by the election of the council, and during his administration performed many important and laborious military services, among which may be specified his expedition against Charles Kavenagh M^c-Art, whom he proclaimed a traitor, and having got £8000, and four hundred men from England, he attacked him in his own lands, and dispersed his soldiers with considerable slaughter; so that Kavenagh was soon after compelled to come to Dublin and submit himself to the council, publicly renouncing his title of M^cMurrough, and surrendering large tracts of his estates.

Sir William Brabazon died at Carrickfergus in 1552. His heart was buried with his English ancestors in Eastwell, and his body in St Katherine's church, Dublin, where there was a long Latin inscription upon a monument, which has been removed in rebuilding the church; and an English inscription summing the above particulars, upon his gravestone. He was ancestor to the earls of Meath.

James, Ninth Earl of Ormonde.

DIED A. D. 1546.

THE ninth earl of Ormonde took a prominent part in the Irish affairs of his time, long before the death of his father, in whose memoir we have already had occasion to notice him. He was, for many years, the great support and prop of his father's declining age, whom we can ascertain by his letters, recently published in the *State Papers*, to have placed much reliance on his zeal and judgment; at times, maintaining his character in the English court against the whispers of court intrigue; at other times, supplying by his youthful activity and valour, the activity which his father's infirmities did not always allow.

We have already mentioned his spirited and noble answer to a letter from his unfortunate and guilty cousin.* We have also mentioned, that in 1532, seven years before his accession to his father's honours, he was appointed lord high treasurer of Ireland for life. In 1535, he was appointed admiral of the kingdom, and the same year was created viscount Thurles. He was also appointed joint governor with his father, over Kilkenny, Waterford, and Tipperary; and in the following year distinguished himself by the suppression of disturbances raised in Munster by James, the young earl of Desmond, whose father having died the same year, he was led by inexperience, inordinate ambition and evil counsel, to launch into the rebellious course so native to his family, and so fatal to many of them. Lord Butler, then lord Thurles, was sent against him, and proceeded with the spirit and prudence of his character, to the attack of his territories about Limerick; he also seized his castle at Lough Gur, and converted it into a fortress against him. We here give the reader one of his own letters on this occasion, which has been preserved in the chapter-house, and recently published:†—

* Page 443.

† *State Papers*, cx.

" Lord Butler to Cromwell.

"Please int your goodness to be advertised, that I have of late addressed mine other letters to you, containing my proceedings in the west parts of this land, immediately after the winning of Dungarvon, to which my journey, if the lord deputy had spared me one of the battering pieces (God being my leader) undoubtedly such service might have been done with so little charge, that the king's highness should have been therewith pleased and well contented. But as it chanced, with such company as I then had of my own, with the good assistance of Stephen Appany, captain of 100 spears, I rode forth to Youghal, Cork, and Limerick, and had, of the young pretended earl of Desmond, such reasonable offers at his coming in, that I suppose these many days the lords and captains of that country were not so testable to good order, like as more amply appeareth in my former letters. Sir, of truth, the lord deputy* minding to have his service and proceedings the better advanced, and blown out by the report of my lords, my father and me, instantly desired us to put our hands to a letter (devised by himself) in his recommendation [commendation]; which letter, I suppose, is sent forth by him unto the king's grace. And albeit, my lord, my father's service or mine was never much commended by his advertisement, yet partly of courtesy, and also trusting he would then with better will have lent me one of the said battering pieces, I put to my hand, and so did my lord, my father, at his return from Waterford, trusting also to have had the said piece to serve against the Breenys. I reckon it no great wisdom, nor yet matter of honour, where any man procureth another to be his herald. And for my part, God and the king knowith my true heart, to whom I humbly commit the construction of my poor service. And since there now repaireth unto his grace, Sir John Saintlaw, who never spared for pain of art and charge to do his grace good service worthy of remuneration, I commit unto his breast the report of my proceedings, and shall most heartily desire you to thank him for the loving approved kindness I have always found in him towards my lord, my father, and me. The king's grace, and he himself, being so pleased, my desire is that he may return hither again, since I have at full perceived his diligent service to be such, as if he return not, I shall have great lack of him, as knowith God who ever preserve you. At Waterford, 17 day of October, 1535.

" Your assured kinsman,

(Signed)

" JAMES BUTLER."

(Superscribed.) "To my right honourable cousin, and most loving friend, master Cromwell, the king's secretary."

Lord Butler's patent, by which he was created lord Thurles, had not yet passed. But it is remarked in a note on this letter, that neither he, nor Grey, or viscount Grane, who were ennobled, or advanced at the same time, seem to have assumed their titles "either in their signatures, or in the style by which they were addressed."†

* Skeffington.

† Note to paper cxi. p. 249.

In consideration of his many and great services, large grants were made to lord Butler in the years 1539 and 1542; of these several were manors which had belonged to the earl of Kildare. In 1539, his father died, and he succeeded to his honours, &c. in the same year he was sent against the Connaught insurgents. In 1543, he had a commission along with Ormonde and Desmond, to make levies through Tipperary, Waterford, Cork, Kerry, to take, imprison, or protect, according to his judgment and the purposes of his commission. Among other commissions, in this busy period of his life, he was sent into Scotland in command of the Irish forces sent over to join the earl of Lenox, and others, in prosecution of a war which had various parties and purposes, but had been promoted and joined by king Henry for views of his own in the year before when he had a considerable force at his disposal. In this year the invasion languished, and the English and Irish were withdrawn without having effected any important service. On this occasion, lord Butler, then ninth earl of Ormonde, is mentioned to have levied 1500 of his own followers—being a number equal to that levied by the deputy, St Leger, for the king.*

In 1546, this illustrious nobleman was lost to his time and country in the flower of his age. Having publicly accused the deputy, St Leger, of high treason, the deputy retorted the charge, and both were summoned to England. While residing there he was poisoned, with several of his servants, at Ely house in Holborn. The entertainment is said, by Ware, to have been given him by his own people—the poison was, in all probability, accidental. The number who were poisoned is mentioned by Lodge to have been thirty-five; Ware says, his steward and sixteen servants. The earl was buried in the church of St Thomas of Acres: but his heart was brought over and buried in the cathedral of St Canice, Kilkenny. We add an extract of his will, which has interest. After the directions concerning his burial, he devises that "My sonne and heyre, being in the prince's graces court, shall have my basin and ewer, which I have here, a silver pot, a salt, a new boll, a trencher, and a spoon of silver. Item, my wife (Joan, daughter to the 11th earl of Desmond), to have my best bracelet of gold sent her for a token. Item, to my lord chancellor of England, my new gilded goblet with the cover, for a token. Item, master Fitz-William, to have a new boll of them that were lately made, for a token, &c., &c."†

He was succeeded by his eldest son, Thomas, viscount Thurles.

Richard, Viscount Mount-Garret.

DIED A. D. 1571.

THIS distinguished person was next brother to the last noticed earl of Ormonde. His life was spent in active services, and he was, in recognition of these, in 1550, created viscount Mount-Garret, by king Edward VI. He was, during the reigns of Edward and Mary, keeper

* Ware's Antiquities.

† Lodge.

of the castle of Fernes. He was, also, honourably employed in several important commissions, and other offices of public trust in queen Elizabeth's reign; and died in 1571, when he was buried in St Canice, Kilkenny, in a tomb, says Lodge, "Whereon is his effigies in armour, with his feet resting against a dog, &c."*

James, Fifteenth Earl of Desmond.

DIED A.D. 1558.

THIS earl succeeded his father Thomas, who died of extreme old age in 1536. It is perhaps a just inference which we have no means to verify, that this earl was himself far advanced in life at the period of this event. Immediately on his accession he followed the example of his illustrious ancestors by attempting an insurrection in Munster. James, viscount Thurles, (afterwards 9th earl of Ormonde,) was immediately dispatched against him by lord Grey, and soon reduced him to submission—wasting his lands, and seizing on his castle of Lough Gur, which, as we have already mentioned in our notice of that nobleman, he fortified and garrisoned against its lord. Desmond submitted, and gave pledges to be a faithful servant to the king, and to do right to the rival claimant of his earldom. He had strongly, on this occasion, expressed to Grey his wish to submit and his fear of the consequence. The lord James Butler, it seems, pretended a claim in right of his wife Joan, daughter and heir to the 11th earl of Desmond. On this account it was, that in the correspondence of James Butler, this earl of Desmond is always called "the pretended earl." On the subject of this claim, Desmond observes that it was to be apprehended, lest by a submission to English law his enemy's claim might be unjustly preferred, "lest by the favours of the other, he and his blood shall be put from their inheritance, which they have possessed, he saith, from the conquest."† The deputy in the same communication recommends Desmond to favour on strong prudential grounds, both as the best means of repressing the natives, and also as a counterbalance to the growing power of the house of Ormonde, now freed from the rivalry of the other great branch of the Geraldines, by the recent hapless events in that family.

This view is corroborated strongly by part of a letter afterwards written 1542, by lord deputy St Leger to Henry. We extract the passage which is interesting for the authentic sketch it presents of the actual state of these parties in the reign of Henry VIII.:—"It may also please your majestie, that where it hath been to me reported, that the said M^cCowley, lately the master of your rolls here, should article against me that I went about to erect a new Geraldine band (probably here referring to lord Thomas's rebellion); meaning the same by the erle of Desmond. The truth is, I laboured most effectually to bring him to your perfect obedience, to my great peril and charge; and this, gracious lord, was the only cause. I saw that now the erle of Kildare

* Lodge.

† Gray's letter to Cromwell. State Papers, clx.

was gone, there was no subject of your majestie's here meet nor able to way (weigh) with the erle of Ormonde, who hath of your majestie's gifte, and of his own inheritance, and rule given him by your majesty, not only 50 or 60 miles in length, but also many of the chief holds of the frontiers of Irishmen; so that if he or any of his heirs should swerve from their duty of allegiance, (which I think verily that he will never do,) it would be more hard to daunt him or them than it was the said erle of Kildare, who had always the said erle of Ormonde in his top, when he would or was like to attempt any such thing. Therefore I thought it good to have a Rowland for an Oliver, (&c. &c.)”*

It was probably on these grounds that Desmond was encouraged to look for favour and protection from the king. To this course he was strongly moved; both by the representations of the deputy and by Henry's favourable reception of Con O'Niall, then created earl of Tyrone. Under these and such influences Desmond sailed from Howth in the summer of 1542, bearing recommendatory letters from the lord deputy St Leger; and was received with great honour by the king. On the same occasion he was also appointed lord high treasurer in Ireland, and enjoyed the post during this and the two following reigns. He was sworn of the privy council, and deputy St Leger by the king's authority, granted to him and his heirs male St Mary's abbey to hold by the fifth part of a knight's fee: with the condition of forfeiture in case of rebellion.†

From this he remained in prosperity and honour till his death in 1558, at Askeaton, where he was buried in the Franciscan Friary.

Maurice Fitz-Gerald, or Black Maurice.

KILLED A. D. 1565.

MAURICE FITZ-GERALD, brother to the earl just noticed, was, by the gift of this earl proprietor of Kerry Currihy, in the county of Cork. When 80 years old he attempted an incursion upon the lands of the Macarthys of Muskerry: he was driving off his prey when he was met, and his party overpowered by one of the Macarthys, who took him prisoner. While Macarthy continued the pursuit, he left Maurice under the custody of four men, who put him to death. He was father to James of Desmond, afterwards distinguished in the great rebellion of Gerald, 16th earl of Desmond.

Sir Anthony St Leger.

DIED A. D. 1559.

THE name of St Leger is upon the roll of Battel Abbey; the brave Sir Robert St Leger, warrior, came to England with king William,

* State Papers, ccclxv.

† Lodge.

and it is said handed him first on shore in Sussex. The descendants of this knight frequently appear on the scene of public events, both in England and Ireland, before the illustrious person whose fortunes we are now to trace, became the founder of an Irish family. The St Legers were, for many generations, settled in the county of Kent; and several individuals of the family appear, during the course of the 15th century, to have held offices lay or clerical in Ireland.

Sir Anthony was sent over by Henry VIII. as one of the commissioners for setting the waste lands upon the marches of the English pale, for 21 years, to such tenants as would improve them, and on such rents as might appear fair to demand, &c., with certain conditions framed to extend the pale and preserve the English character of its inhabitants. This commission is historically important, for the distinct view which it affords of the state of the pale in the year 1537. We shall, therefore, have to notice it farther on in detail. It may be here enough for the reader to know, that the commission carried an inquest, by means of juries, into the several districts of the pale; from the returns of this the result is a most frightful picture of exaction and petty tyranny, under the odious names of Coyne and Livery, and other pretences of extortion all prohibited by law. Surveys were also made of several estates of the greater proprietors; regulations of the most judicious character were decided upon in conformity with these, and intrusted to this commission to carry into effect. For this purpose they were armed with very considerable authority, and executed their commission with vigour and effect. They made sufficient inquiries as to the parties concerned in lord Thomas Fitz-Gerald's rebellion to produce a salutary fear, while they refrained from an injudicious severity, which might excite disaffection. They let to farm the king's lands, reserving the annual payments due to the exchequer; and they reconciled the earl of Ormonde to the lord deputy.

Having executed his commission, St Leger returned to England, where he remained till 1540. When he was sent over as lord deputy, and was sworn on the 25th of July, he brought over with him a commission, appointed for the further prosecution of the measures already mentioned, which they forwarded materially by a survey of the crown lands. An order was transmitted to the master of the rolls and the archbishop of Dublin, to have the goods of every description, which had been the property of the late lord deputy Gray, appraised and delivered into the custody of the new deputy, to hold for the king, and use during the royal pleasure. Gray, one of the ablest, most active, and in every way serviceable governors Ireland had yet known, was, on his return to England, by means of the malicious intrigues of his enemies and the reckless tyranny of Henry, most iniquitously accused, tried, and condemned. His conduct on the occasion was an instance of the difference between active courage and passive fortitude: so vigorous in military command, so brave in the field, his firmness was not of that high order that accompanies the hero into the horrors of captivity, and supports him against the wantonness of the tyrant's cruelty: his spirit sunk under the terror of Henry's brutality— which he had probably been accustomed to fear and shrink from; and he refused to defend himself. He was condemned and executed. He

was more resolute to face death than the tyrant's bluster, and met his fate with heroic calmness. The principal charge against him was the suffering the son of Kildare, a youth of ten, to be saved from the general slaughter of his family.

St Leger successfully exerted himself to infuse activity, and control the direction of every department and functionary of the government. He sent the marshal of Ireland, Sir William Brereton, to receive the submission of the earl of Desmond. Brereton died at Kilkenny. But the earl came to meet the deputy at Cahir, in the following January, and tendered his submission which was accepted by St Leger. This submission was confirmed by the delivery of the earl's son, Gerald, as an hostage. This earl also renounced the privilege of the Desmond lords, to absent themselves from parliaments, and not to enter walled towns: a privilege which, the reader may recollect, was granted in 1444, to James the 7th earl. This transaction had been a considerable time in agitation. Among the State Papers of the year 1538, a letter from St Leger, written during the time of his commission (already noticed), mentions that the earl had delivered a hostage and a written engagement. And another letter, written by lord Ormonde in the same year, mentions evidently with a view to injure the deputy, (Grey.) "And after my lord deputie of his own motion, went with four of his company to James, earl of Desmond, and persuaded him, after such a fashion, that he desired him for the love of God to deliver him the hostage, considering that he have written to the king's highness, that he had the same; otherwise, that he was like to be utterly undone, and hereupon he had the hostage given him, who promised, that after he had shewed the same, that he should be delivered (back) without any hurt, losses or danger, as he was true knight; which matter was done in Thomen, O'Brien's country."

On the 13th June, 1541, Sir Anthony summoned a parliament in Dublin, in which it was enacted that king Henry and his successors should from that time bear the title of kings of Ireland.* Several enactments were also made for the administration of justice in questions affecting property; and an application was made to the king for permission to hold the following session of the same parliament at Limerick, on account of the salutary effect its presence might have on the earl of Desmond and other chiefs in that vicinity.† At this parliament also, Meath was divided into East Meath and West Meath, for the convenience of county jurisdiction.

It was also in the same year, and in the administration of Sir Anthony, that O'Niall, and a number of other Irish chiefs, made their submissions, and swore fidelity to the English crown. In 1542, the king granted to Sir Anthony, in recompense for his many services, the site and precinct of the monastery of Grany, in the county of Carlow, with several other lands and profits in different parts of Ireland.

In 1543, Sir Anthony was summoned over to England to give a full account of his government, and of the state of Ireland. His account was considered so satisfactory, that he was created a knight companion

* This was followed by a coinage of groats, twopenny and penny pieces, for Irish circulation, having a harp on the reverse.—*Lodge*.

† State Papers, cccliii. p. 311.

of the order of the garter, and sent back as lord deputy. After four months' stay in England, he landed in Ireland, June, 1544, and was received with every mark of the public regard which had been conciliated by the justice of his administration. It had been throughout his principle to support the weak against the injustice of the strong; and whenever the case admitted, he usually took occasion to dissolve every ancient convention which gave a pretext for tyranny: of this may be mentioned as an instance, his decision between O'Niall and O'Donell, by which he set O'Donell free from his oppressive subjection to O'Niall, substituting a moderate and defined annual rent.

Sir Anthony, in common with every other lord deputy, had to bear the vexatious consequences of the jealousy of the greater proprietors. Of these the earl of Ormonde was then at the head. The depression of the Geraldine faction, and especially of the house of Kildare, had given a great preponderance to the Butlers whose hereditary prudence had preserved them from the incitements by which other chiefs had been tempted into many a fatal step. Sir Anthony, feeling strongly the great want of means which limited and defeated his best efforts, seems to have determined to increase the revenue by tributes to be levied upon the country. The allowance from England* was quite inadequate, and the Irish revenue was insufficient to supply the deficiency. The means adopted by St Leger were, however, unpopular, and gave a handle to the factious hostility of the earl of Ormonde. This earl, after offering all the resistance in his power, at last accused the deputy of treason: the deputy retorted the accusation, and both parties were summoned over to England, and their accusations investigated by the privy council. But they were found to be vexatious, and both parties were dismissed.

Sir Anthony returned and resumed his government, which was continued to him at the accession of king Edward VI. In the following year his activity was employed by the restlessness of the Irish chiefs. These petty insurrections are in few cases worth detail. O'Conor Faly and O'More received a sanguinary overthrow from his arms, while they were plundering the county of Kildare; the O'Byrnes were attacked and dispersed. And some time after, receiving a reinforcement from England, of 600 foot and 400 horse, under captain general Bellingham, he invaded Leix and Offaly, and proclaimed O'Conor and O'More traitors. Their followers were routed and dispersed; and being left defenceless, these two powerful chiefs were reduced to the necessity of coming in with their submission. Sir Anthony took them with him to England, where, by his desire, they were pardoned, taken into favour, and had handsome pensions. The high sense entertained of these services of Sir Anthony, was shown by large English grants: he received a grant of the manor-house of Wingham Barton, Bersted, an appendant to the manor of Leeds Castle, with the fee of one of the parks of Leeds Castle, with two manors, Eastfarbon and Bentley, in the county of Kent, where his own property lay.

In the mean time, Edward Bellingham, who had already distinguished himself in Ireland, was sent as lord justice; and St Leger

* £5000 per annum.

remained in England till 1550: he then returned to Ireland with instructions to call a parliament. On this occasion, the annalists mention one of those incidents which were at this time becoming more frequent, and which must impress the reader with a sense of the growing improvement of the condition of the settlement. Charles Kavenagh MacArt came before this parliament with his submission, consenting not only to renounce the title of Macmurrough, but giving up large tracts of land, and submitting to the limitation of his powers as chief or "captain of his nation."

On the 6th of February, an order for the reading of the liturgy of the church of England came over, in the name of Edward VI. On which the lord deputy convened an assembly of the Irish ecclesiastics of every order, to which he intimated the king's pleasure. To this announcement, Dowdal, the archbishop of Armagh, offered the most resolute opposition. The deputy, nevertheless, determined to carry the point: he was supported by Browne, archbishop of Dublin, and the other prelates; and on the following Easter Sunday, the English liturgy was publicly read in Christ Church. Dowdal was deprived, and withdrew from the kingdom, and the primacy was annexed to the see of Dublin.

Soon after, Archbishop Browne having some discontent against the deputy, had recourse to the common complaint of treason, which was then resorted to on the most frivolous grounds as the most efficient instrument of party hostility, and strongly indicates the weakness of government, and the low civilization of the aristocracy and prelacy of the time. St Leger was recalled to clear himself. And as he was again sent over by queen Mary, it is to be inferred that the charges of the archbishop were merely vexatious. He was not, however, allowed to hold the government long. Queen Mary, with a feeble intellect and a tender conscience, influenced by her own superstition and the craft of others, soon displayed that inflamed spirit of persecution which for a time filled the kingdom with horrors till then and since unknown: and a change of policy beginning in England, where it was opposed to the spirit of the nation, was quickly extended to Ireland where it was congenial. The Irish nation, the last to adopt the errors of the church of Rome, were as slow to turn from them at the dictate of a prince. And it is not likely that under the new government, a deputy, who, like St Leger, had mainly contributed to effect the changes of the last two reigns, could be acceptable to either queen or people. He had seized the abbey lands for Henry—carried into effect important regulations of church preferment—persuaded the Irish chiefs to renounce the church of Rome, and enforced the English liturgy. And such merits could not fail to be unfavourably recollected. His high reputation as a governor made it, however, inexpedient to remove him without some shadow of complaint. A complaint in keeping with the spirit of his accusers was found. It was represented that in the former reign he had aimed to ingratiate himself with the government by ridiculing the sacred mystery of transubstantiation. On this ground he was recalled in 1556. He defended himself so well, from various charges which his enemies brought against him, that his friends in Ireland looked for his return. But he adopted a wiser course. Having obtained a discharge

THE HISTORY OF THE LIFE OF GERALD FITZ-GERALD, CHIEF OF THE
FAMILY OF THE FITZ-GERALDS, FROM THE YEAR 1150 TO 1200.

Gerald Long Fox of Kildare.

1150—1200—1200—1200

THE HISTORY OF THE LIFE OF GERALD FITZ-GERALD, CHIEF OF THE
FAMILY OF THE FITZ-GERALDS, FROM THE YEAR 1150 TO 1200.

THE HISTORY OF THE LIFE OF GERALD FITZ-GERALD, CHIEF OF THE
FAMILY OF THE FITZ-GERALDS, FROM THE YEAR 1150 TO 1200.

* Afterwards bishop of Kildare.

consulted her indignation and contempt by leaving him: O'Donnell never saw her more. Her nephew was long and anxiously sought for, though after the first burst of king Henry's fury, it is unlikely that any harm would have happened him. On this point, the following extract is at least worth notice. It is taken from a paper written by St Leger and the other commissioners joined with him in 1537, and we should think speaks from authority:—

"Item, whereas young Fitz-Gerald, second sonne to the late earl of Kildare, hath withdrawn himself from the king's majesty without ground or cause, his grace nothing minding, to the said Gerald Fitz-Gerald, but honour and wealth, and to have cherished him as his kinsman, in like sort as his other brother is cherished with his mother in the realm of England: we require the said lord James of Desmond to write unto the said Gerald Fitz-Gerald, advising him in like sorts, as his uncle the lord deputie hath done, to submit himself to the king his sovereign lord. And if he will not do so at this gentle monicion, then to proceed against him and his accomplices as against the king's rebels and disobedantes. Item, if the said Gerald Fitz-Gerald do at the monicion of the said lord James of Desmond, submit himself and come to the said lord James of Desmond, upon certificate thereof to the said commissioners made, we the said commissioners concede, that the said Gerald Fitz-Gerald shall have the king's most gracious pardon for his said absenting, and for all other offences done to our said sovereign lord, and to be from thenceforth taken as the king's true and loving subject."*

From this document it should be inferred, that the course most obvious, safe, and beneficial for young Gerald, then about fifteen years of age, would be a surrender of his person. The first fury of the king's resentment had, in the course of two intervening years, been cooled; and a youth who could have as yet incurred no personal hostility, might have reckoned with certainty on the just indulgence thus held out in a formal and public pledge. But he was in the hands of advisers and protectors who saw the whole matter in a different light, and who had other views for him. His situation made him the subject of political intrigues, and his own friends were also strongly actuated by religious feeling in refusing to submit him to the tuition of Henry.

Fitz-Gerald arrived safely at St Maloes,† and was from thence sent to the king of France. There had lately been a peace concluded, and it was probably according to some of the articles of a treaty that Sir John Wallop, the English ambassador, demanded that he should be delivered up. The king of France, unwilling to comply with this demand, temporized with the ambassador, and suffered Gerald to escape towards Flanders. The ambassador received some immediate intimation of this, and lost no time in having him pursued. He was overtaken by Sherlock, the person thus employed, at *Valenciennes*: but the governor of the town, made aware of the king's favourable intent, and probably acting upon instructions, arrested Sherlock. Gerald thus escaped to Brussels. Here, too, he was pursued, and claimed by

* State Papers, vol. ii.

† Cox

the messengers of the same ambassador; he was therefore compelled to make his escape to Liege. At Liege he was befriended by the emperor, who granted a hundred crowns a-month for his expenses, and recommended him to the bishop's protection.

At Liege he remained safely for half-a-year, at the end of which time he had the good fortune to be placed in security from all further attempts on his freedom. Cardinal Pole, his kinsman, and the enemy of Henry VIII., sent for him and had him conveyed to Rome, where he took every means to have him educated according to his rank and future expectations. It is mentioned, that he placed him under the care of the bishop of Verona, the cardinal of Mantua, and the duke of Mantua, in succession, and gave him an allowance of three hundred crowns a-year, to which the duke of Mantua made the like addition. At about the age of seventeen, he was removed by his friendly protector to his own immediate superintendence, and had apartments in his palace in Rome. "The cardinal," writes Hooker, "greatly rejoiced in his kinsman, had him carefully trained up in his house, interlacing, with such discretion, his learning and studies, with exercises of activity, as he should not be after accounted of the learned for an ignorant idiot, nor taken of active gentlemen for a dead and dumpish meacocks. If he had committed any fault, the cardinal would secretly command his tutors to correct him; and all that, notwithstanding he would in presence dandle the boy, as if he were not privy to his punishment. And upon complaint made, he used to check Fitz-Gerald his master openly, for chastising so severely his pretty darling."* Here, his education being completed, when he was twenty years of age he was allowed to enter the service of the knights of Malta, in which he quickly obtained military distinction. The knights of Malta were engaged in continual war against the Turks, and were in the habit of making frequent descents on their coasts, from which they often carried away plunder to a considerable amount: in this service young Gerald not only won great distinction, but also much wealth. The cardinal rejoiced in his success; made a large addition to his allowance, and recommended him to the service of Cosmo, the duke of Florence, by whom he was appointed master of the horse. His conduct and character recommended him to the great duke of Tuscany, by whom he was appointed master of the horse—an office which he held for the following three years.

Holinshed mentions, that while he was in this service, he met with an accident which harmonizes well with the vicissitudes of his life. Having made a visit to Rome for his amusement, he was hunting in company with the cardinal Farneze, when his horse came suddenly upon a concealed pit, twenty fathoms deep, and, with his rider, plunged headlong down and fell to the bottom. Fortunately for young Gerald, he was light, alert, and self-possessed. After going down to a great depth, the fall of the horse was slightly impeded by some bushes or roots, or perhaps creepers, which had, during the lapse of ages, grown down to that depth: he had the thought to grasp at them. The horse reached the bottom with full force, and was killed instantaneously by the

* Sup. to Holinshed's Chron. vol. vi.

shock: Gerald held fast by the roots, until his arms grew so weary that he could hold no longer: he then let himself down, little hoping to escape the fall; fortunately he had not far to go, and lighted safe on the dead carcase of his horse. The situation was still unpromising enough. There was no possibility of ascending; and he stood there, up to his ankles in water and in a hopeless condition, for about three hours. Providentially he had taken with him a dog, which, after hunting about for him a long time to no purpose, at last traced him to the chasm into which he had fallen. Stopping there, the faithful and sagacious creature set up a long howling, and never stopped until he drew the attention of some hunters of the same company. Being thus discovered, he was soon extricated by a rope and basket. Cox, who tells the story from Hollinshed, rejects it as "a little monkish." It may be in a great measure fictitious, but has assuredly nothing otherwise monkish in its object or construction.

While such was the course of his life abroad, he seems to have been the object of continued anxiety and unremitting contention both among friends and foes at home. The O'Donells, O'Nials, and other Irish chiefs, were loud in menace and expostulation; and a letter from John Allen to Cromwell, in 1539, mentions the threat of these chiefs, "that if the king's majestie will not restore young Gerald to all the possessions and pre-eminence that his father had in this land, they will do what they can, if they may have opportunity, to put him in by force."* By a letter from Brabazon, of the same date, it appears as if there then existed a suspicion that Gerald was actually in the kingdom, and consequently a strange ignorance as to his real place of abode; though, if we do not impute the same ignorance to nearly all Irish historians of this period, there is no reason to suppose that he returned to Ireland for many years from his first escape, until long after the death of king Henry. One thing is certain, that his capture was considered as an object of the first importance, not only, as Brabazon expresses it, "lest this said Gerald Fitz-Gerald may play the like part (with others of his party and kinsmen) when he may," but also, on the ground that if he were once taken, their power would cease. These notices, and many other to the same effect, which from time to time occur through the correspondence of the chief Irish officers with the English court, indicate undeniably that an importance was attached to this young nobleman, which by no means appears in Ware, Cox, Leland, or any others of the various historical writers whom we have had occasion to consult.

In 1544, five years after the mention above referred to, this impression seems to be much augmented, and a long letter, exclusively on the subject, is written from the Irish lord justice and council to king Henry. It informs him, that by letters from Waterford, the council is informed that young Gerald is at Nantes, on his way from Italy to invade Ireland, and that he was there awaiting a navy and army, to be supplied for the purpose by the French king. This information evidently occasioned great alarm to the council, who express their conviction of the inadequacy of any means of resistance in their power, or that of

* State Papers, vol. iii.

the city of Waterford, against which the expedition was supposed to be directed. This report seems at the same time to have been transmitted to the English council, whose communication to the Irish council seems to have reached Ireland before the despatch here noticed had been sent off. The information appears to stand chiefly on the authority of W. de la Cluse, a person dwelling in "Bridges," whose father seems to have kept a house of entertainment for the Irish resorting thither; and also certain Wexford men, who being prisoners, were offered their freedom on the condition of joining in the service of Gerald Fitz-Gerald. The Irish council express their opinion that the invasion would be more likely to take place in the country of the Macarthies, near the city of Cork; not only of its being more directly in their course, but also on account of the circumstance of one of the Macarthys being son to his aunt Eleanor.*

From the whole tenor of the government correspondence, during the latter years of Henry VIII., it is certain that Gerald was for a considerable time the subject of much anxious fear, expectation, and vigilance both to his friends and enemies; but, notwithstanding a few doubtful affirmations to the contrary, we should infer that he prudently kept aloof, and avoided committing himself in any proceeding which must have had the sure effect of barring for ever the remotest possibility of his restoration to his family honours and possessions. The death of Henry VIII., in 1546, must have been felt to be the promise of better days to this young lord. But we cannot, with any certainty, trace the favourable turn which his affairs may have taken from this time till 1552, when he was taken into royal favour, and restored to very considerable portions of the estates of his father. In two years more he was created earl of Kildare and baron Offaly; and is from this date found taking an active part in the various measures of the English government for the reduction of rebellious chiefs, and the pacification of the country.

In 1557 he is mentioned as having joined with the lord lieutenant, Sidney, in his campaign against Mac Donnell, a Scot, who had invaded the north of Ireland at the head of a strong party of his countrymen. Besides the earl of Kildare, the lord lieutenant was accompanied on this expedition by the lords Ormonde, Baltinglass, Delvin, Dunsany, and Dunboyne. There was no engagement, as the Scots scattered before them, and took refuge in the woods.

In 1561 he persuaded his kinsman O'Neale, then engaged in rebellious proceedings, to submit to the queen; and generally conducted himself with a prudent regard to the interests of the government. The events of the remainder of his life are, however, such as to fall more appropriately under other heads, as at this time the troubles of the pale rose to a dangerous height, and long continued, during the restless life of the celebrated Shane O'Neale, and the rebellion of the sixteenth earl of Desmond, both of whom we must notice at some length. Though Gerald's lands were restored, and his titles conferred anew by creation, yet it was not till 1568 that the act of attainder against his father's blood was repealed, in a parliament held in Dublin. He was

* Married to Macarthy of Carbery.

at this period of his life frequently intrusted with the defence of the pale, especially in 1574. In 1579 he joined Sir William Drury against the Spanish force which landed in Kerry, to support the earl of Desmond's rebellion; notwithstanding which services, he was, in the following year, arrested on suspicion of corresponding with the Leinster rebels, and sent with his son, lord Henry Fitz-Gerald, to England, where they were thrown into the Tower. On trial, he was fully acquitted. He was one of the lords present in Sir John Perrot's parliament, in 1585, in which year his death took place. The following summary of his will is given by Lodge. "He left £100 to erect a monument over his grave, and the like sum to buy some jewels, to be given to the queen from him, as a token of his humble and dutiful loyalty to her highness. Bequeathes to his wife, as a token of goodwill and remembrance, a jewel, called an agate, which he bought lately, and a piece of black tuft taffaty, containing thirteen yards. To his brother, Edward, his best vest of gilt and graven bolls, with a cover. To his son and heir, Henry, all his gold buttons, hat, and capbands of gold, silver, and pearl; footclothes and horse furniture; gilt rapiers and daggers, with their girdles and hangers; shirtbodies, shirts of mail, armour, artillery; three of the best suits of hangings of tapestry, or cloth of arras; and all his stud, except three store mares, to his second son, William: leaves other legacies. Wills that his wife should take care of all his old servants that served him in Ireland, for some of whom he leaves a liberal provision; and appoints his son, Henry, and son-in-law, lord Delvin, executors."*

Sir Edmond Butler.

DIED ABOUT A. D. 1580.

SIR EDMOND BUTLER was the second son of James, ninth earl of Ormonde, and possessed the manors of Roscrea and Cloughgrenan. In 1562 he was intrusted with the government of the county of Carlow, while the lord deputy was engaged in the north against Shane O'Neill. In 1567, in consideration of his active and distinguished services, he was knighted, and had a grant for the return of all writs in the contracts of Oremon, Ely-ogerth, and Ely-ocarrol, in the county Tipperary. Notwithstanding this course of distinguished and honourable loyalty, by means not now to be discovered in the confusion of our annals and the want of private history, he was warped into a dangerous course, together with two of his brothers. With these he raised a rebellion in Munster, and was declared a traitor. Before matters had proceeded to a decisive length, his wonted prudence prevailed, and he submitted and surrendered his estates, on which he and his brothers received the queen's pardon. After this he distinguished himself, in the following year, 1574, against the O'Mores, then the principal native enemies of the pale. As no further mention of his name occurs, it cannot be ascertained, from any authentic docu-

* Lodge.

ment, at what precise period his death took place. According to Lodge, he died at Inistioge, and was buried among his ancestors at St Canice, in Kilkenny.*

Captain Richard Browne.

KILLED A. D. 1570.

RICHARD BROWNE was a younger son to Anthony, first viscount Montague, in England. He came over to Ireland, in the service of queen Elizabeth, at the head of an independent company. When Connaught was pacified by Sir Henry Sidney, Browne settled at the *Neale*, in the county of Mayo, and was appointed high sheriff of the surrounding country. In this office his conduct, spirit, and useful activity soon became honourably distinguished: he exerted himself to the utmost to reclaim the degenerate English, as well as the natives, to order and civilization. His efforts exposed him to the dangers arising from the brawls and factions, which it was his constant study to put an end to, and he was slain by the natives while engaged in these arduous and dangerous duties. We cannot ascertain the year, but have ventured to put down 1570 as undoubtedly not far from the period. He was succeeded by his son, Josias, and was ancestor to the earls of Altamont.

Thomas, Sixteenth Earl of Kerry.

BORN A. D. 1502—DIED A. D. 1590.

THIS eminent lord succeeded his brother, Gerald, in the earldom. His youth was spent in Italy. He was bred in Milan, and early entered the German service. On his brother's death, the inheritance was seized by one of the family, who was next heir, on the failure of next of kin in the direct line. The matter might have remained thus, and the wrongful possessor allowed to obtain that protection which time must ever give to possession, but most of all in that age of unsettled rights; but fortunately for him, he was timely remembered by his nurse, Joan Harman, who was not prevented by the infirmities of old age from proceeding with her daughter in search of her foster-child. Having embarked at Dingle, she landed in France, and from thence to Italy. After overcoming the many difficulties of so long a journey, with her imperfect means and ignorance of the way, she found her noble foster-son; and, having given him the needful information concerning the state of his affairs, she died on her way home.

Lord Thomas came over to take possession of his estate and honours. For two years he had to contend with the resolute opposition of the intruder who relied on the circumstance of his being less known in

* Lodge.

the country from having passed his life abroad. The intruding claimant was himself, it is likely, misled by the local character of his own acquaintance with society. In two years the claim of justice prevailed, and in or about the year 1550, in his forty-eighth year lord Thomas Fitz-Maurice obtained full possession of his rights.

He was treated with distinguishing honour and confidence by Philip and Mary; who, in a letter apprizing him of their marriage, desired his good offices in aid of the lord deputy, to assist in rectifying the disorders which had been suffered to increase for some years in their Irish dominions. His course for many years, was thus one of loyal duty, and honoured by the royal favour, although its incidents were not such as to call for our special notice. Among these it may be mentioned, that in the parliament of the third year of Philip and Mary, he sat as premier baron; but in that of the fourth year of the same reign, lord Trimleston was placed above him. But in 1581, when in his 79th year, he was led into rebellion, by the example of the times and the seeming weakness of the English. The lord deputy, supposing that the quiet of Munster was secured by the flight of the earl of Desmond and the death of John of Desmond, dismissed the larger proportion of his English forces. In consequence of this dangerous step, the earl of Kerry and his son, moved by their discontents against the deputy, broke into rebellion. They began by proceeding to dislodge the English from their garrisons, which they effected to some extent by the boldness and dexterity of their movements. First attacking the garrison of Adare, they slew the captain and most of the soldiers. They next marched to Lisconnel, in which there were only eight soldiers, as the place was supposed to be protected by its strength and difficulty of access. The entrance to this castle was secured by two gates, of which, upon the admission of any person, it was usual to make fast the outer before the inner was unbarred. Taking advantage of the circumstance, the earl bribed a woman who used every morning early to enter these gates, with a large basket of turf, wood, and other cumbrous necessities, to let fall her basket in the outer gate, so as to prevent its being closed without delay. During the night he contrived to steal a strong party into a cabin which had very inconsiderately been allowed to stand close to the gate. All fell out favourably. The woman dropped her load, and, according to her instructions, uttered a loud cry; the men rushed in, and the porter was slain before he was aware of the nature of the incident, and in a few moments more not a man of the garrison was alive.*

Encouraged by this success, the earl marched to Adnagh, which he thought to win by another stratagem. He hired for the purpose a young girl of loose character, who was to obtain admission, and when admitted, to act according to the earl's contrivance, so as to betray the fort. The capture of Lisconnel had, however, the effect of putting the captain on his guard. He soon contrived to draw from the young woman a confession of her perfidious intent, after which he caused her to be thrown from the walls.†

From this the earl proceeded to range through the counties of

* Hooker.

† Ib.

Waterford and Tipperary, in which he committed waste, and took spoil without meeting any resistance.

The deputy receiving an account of these outrages drew together about four hundred men, and marched into Kerry; and coming to the wood of Lisconnell, where the earl was encamped with seven hundred, an encounter took place, in which the earl's army was put to flight and scattered away, leaving their spoil behind them. The earl, with a few more, escaped into the mountains of Sleaulaughter. Marching on into the estates of Fitz-Maurice, the lord deputy seized and garrisoned the forts and strong places. Another severe defeat, which soon followed, completed the fall of the earl, who found himself unable to attempt any further resistance. He then applied to the earl of Ormonde, to whom he had done all the mischief in his power, to obtain a pardon for him. The earl of Ormonde had the generosity to intercede for him, and he was pardoned.

The remaining events of his life have nothing remarkable enough to claim attention. He lived on in honour and prosperity, till the close of his eighty-eighth year, when he died at Lixnaw, on the 16th December, 1590. He is said to have been the handsomest man of his time, and also remarkable to an advanced age for his great strength.

Robert, Fifth Lord Trimleston.

DIED A. D. 1573.

THE first lord Trimleston was Robert Barnewall, second son to Sir Christopher Barnewall, of Crickston, in Meath, who was chief justice of the king's bench in 1445 and 1446. The ancestors intermediate between this eminent person and the fifth lord, had most of them acted their part in the troubled politics of their respective generations with credit, and were eminent in their day. We select the fifth lord for this brief notice, as he is mentioned in terms of high eulogy by the chroniclers. In 1561, he was joined in commission with the archbishop of Dublin and other lords, for the preservation of the peace of the pale, during the absence of lord deputy Sussex. Hollinshed gives the following account of him:—"He was a rare nobleman, and endowed with sundry good gifts, who, having well wedded himself to the reformation of his miserable country, was resolved for the whetting of his wit, which nevertheless was pregnant and quick; by a short trade and method he took in his study to have sipt up the very sap of the common law, and upon this determination sailing into England, sickened shortly after at a worshipful matron's house at Combury, named Margaret Tiler, where he was, to the great grief of all his country, pursued with death, when the weal of the public had most need of his life." His death happened in 1573: he left no issue, and was succeeded by his brother Peter.

Richard, Second Earl of Clanricarde.

DIED A. D. 1582.

RICHARD DE BURGO, son and successor to Ulick the first earl of Clanricarde, was commonly called *Sassanagh* by the Irish. The first exploit, for which he is commemorated, is the capture of Cormac Roe O'Connor of Offally, who had for some time previous given great trouble to the government, and very much disturbed the quiet of the pale. He was on this account proclaimed a traitor by the government; in consequence of which he became so much alarmed for his safety, that he came into Dublin on the 18th November, 1548, and made his submission. He was pardoned by the deputy: but on recovering from his alarm, his restless and turbulent spirit, incapable of subordination, soon returned to the same troublesome and dangerous course.

It was therefore found necessary to proceed to rougher extremities, and he was taken prisoner by the earl of Clanricarde, who sent him to Dublin, where he was put to death.

In the following years, the chiefs of his race in the west appear to have been involved in party wars among themselves and with the neighbouring chiefs. In the year 1552, he took the castle of Roscommon by stratagem;* and in the following year, being at war with John de Burgo, he invaded his lands, but was compelled to retire by the appearance of a stronger force; Daniel O'Brien having marched to the aid of John.

It is mentioned by Lodge that he was lord lieutenant of Ireland, and that with the assistance of Sir Richard Bingham, he gained a victory over the Scots at the river Moye in 1553. It is singular that we find no notice of this event in Ware's *Annals*, in Cox's *Hibernia*, in Hooper who writes with so much minute detail, or in Leland who was little likely to pass a event so remarkable. But it is more worthy of notice that the same combination of names and circumstances takes place at a later period, in which five or six years after the death of this earl, his son, then earl of Clanricarde, obtains distinction in a great victory gained by Bingham over 3000 Scots at Ardnary, on the river Moye. As this event occurs thirty years after the date assigned by Lodge, while the incidents are precisely the same, there is some difficulty in accounting for the oversight; and the more so, as the incident is again repeated in its proper period by Lodge, in his notice of the third earl. It is, however, mentioned by Ware, that in 1558 this earl gained a great victory over the Scots when they were called in to the assistance of "some families of the Bourkes," with whom he was at war. To this Leland thus alludes, "The Scottish adventurers in the meantime, as the decision of the war in Tirconnel left them no military employment in Ulster, entered into the service of some turbulent chieftains of the west; but before they could raise any considerable disorders, were suddenly attacked by the earl of Clanricarde, who defeated and pursued these pestilent invaders, to the almost total destruction of their body, &c."†

* Lodge.

† Leland, ii.

The latter years of this earl seem to have been disturbed by the dissensions of his unruly sons, who not only quarrelled amongst themselves, but rebelled against their father. The earl was thrice married, and these sons were, perhaps, bred up with no kindly feeling amongst themselves. At his death in 1582, he was succeeded by Ulick, his eldest son, whose legitimacy was disputed, but confirmed.

Donald O'Brien.

WE have already had occasion to mention the most remarkable event in the life of this ancient chief, in our notice of his nephew, the first earl of Thomond; whose father his own elder brother slew in 1553, and usurped his inheritance: but was obliged by the interposition of the government to resign it to Conor O'Brien the rightful heir, who was then created earl of Thomond.

It was not long, however, before Donald O'Brien's discontent at an arrangement, to which nothing but superior force could have compelled him to assent, broke out into open violence. On this the lord deputy Sussex marched into Limerick and took the castles of Clare, Clonroad, Bunratty, of which he delivered the latter to the earl of Thomond. On this occasion an amusing and characteristic fiction is told by Sullivan, which we transcribe from Cox. The lord president having, according to Sullivan, enticed Donald into Limerick on the promise of allowing him to pass out again freely from the gates, contrived to turn him out from a wrong gate, so that the river Shannon separated him from his army: and then immediately sent the young earl of Thomond to take possession of the country. In this disconsolate situation Donald had no resource but to take shelter with his horse in a poor and lowly cabin, so miserably unpromising in its appearance, that his horse, who was, it may be presumed, also a high-bred beast, and touched with the unruly spirit of the age, refused to enter a hovel so far inferior to his breeding and pretensions. In this delicate juncture, while the generous steed of O'Brien was yet tossing his head in chivalric disdain at the door, where his master thought it no disgrace to enter—his scorn was allayed by the sensible admonition of O'Brien's page, who whispered in his ear, that his master, O'Brien, was to lodge for the night in that very cabin: and represented that he might very well lower his crest and crupper to keep his master company. On this delicate and seasonable hint, the noble beast "being well bred, did very civilly comply in matters of ceremony." But though his good sense and respect for his master thus repressed his pride, a fresh difficulty arose when it came to the demands of a nice and pampered appetite. "When he came to supper, he was at a loss, for he was used to feed on wheat, and could not conform to country entertainment, until the foot-boy whispered him once more, that his master, O'Brien, who fed upon an oaten cake, commanded him to eat the same, and then the horse laying aside all further conceit, very meekly eat his supper like the rest of the company." Of the horse there is nothing further recorded. His master was compelled to fly the country and continue for five years in exile.

He returned about 1563, and received lands from his nephew: he was also taken into the king's favour, and led from thenceforth so quiet and respectable a life that no further mention of his name occurs.

Henry, Twelfth Earl of Kildare.

BORN A. D. 1564—DIED A. D. 1597.

THIS nobleman, born in the year 1564, was the son and successor of Gerald, of whose life, marked by singular vicissitudes and changes of fortune, we have already given some account. Though living in a period when the political consideration of the great and powerful class to which he belonged was beginning to decline with the extension of the power and efficiency of the government; and where it became the condition of great fame to be notorious for crime and misfortune, yet he maintained in the wars of his troubled age, the character of his distinguished line. Of the events in which his name might be brought forward, we shall here only notice the last. He was in his 33d year, when he was called upon to attend the lord deputy Borrough into Ulster.

The country was involved in rebellion which started up on every side; and lord deputy Borrough, who was but new in his office, had made a month's truce with O'Niall, which each party employed in preparation for further hostilities. When the truce was expired, the deputy forced his way through a difficult pass near Armagh, which the Irish had, with their wonted skill, fortified by interweaving the boughs of trees and blocking the way with trunks of others which they felled for the purpose. Having conquered this obstacle, the deputy marched towards the fort of Blackwater, which he quickly carried by assault. The English were returning thanks to God for their success, when they perceived a strong body of Irish advancing upon them rapidly from the neighbouring wood. They quickly stood to their arms and received the fierce onset of the Irish, who were, however, repulsed, and disappointed as they came. The English suffered little loss: but among the slain, were two foster-brothers of the earl of Kildare. The earl's grief was inconsolable, and he died shortly after of a broken heart.*

Thomas, Tenth Earl of Ormonde.

BORN A. D. 1532—DIED A. D. 1614.

IN placing the life of this illustrious Irishman in the present period, it becomes necessary to explain a disposition which may otherwise seem to be a violation of the arrangement which we have adopted; viz., to place our notices according to the death of the persons noticed. We should, however, here observe, that this most convenient general rule has been, all through the previous portion of our work, subject to

* Ware's Annals, Cox, Lodge.

another more important, though less definite principle of arrangement. We have endeavoured, in all the more extended and strictly historical memoirs of contemporary persons, to place them according to the order of the events in which they were mainly concerned; as it is evident that, by this means, the historical order would be best preserved. Thus our arrangement has been in reality one compounded on both these considerations; and, we may observe, adopted more as a convenience than as a restriction. In the present instance, as in a few more which follow in the close of the period, it will be accordingly observed, that although this earl, together with the first earl of Cork, &c., continue to live into the reign of James I., yet all the great events of their lives fall within the reign of queen Elizabeth, in such a manner that, were we to place them in our next period, we should have to travel back into the history of this—a violation of order which would be something more than formal.

The tenth earl of Ormonde, was born some time about 1532; and, as he was thus but fourteen years old in 1546—the time of his father's death—great precautions were taken to preserve his property against the encroaching and freebooting spirit of the age. For this purpose it was ordered that the lord justice should draw the English army, at his command, towards the counties of Kilkenny and Tipperary; and it was also ordered that the government of these counties should be committed to his family. He was himself brought up in the English court, and was one of the most favoured companions of the young prince Edward, with whom he was educated. At the age of fourteen, he was made a knight of the Bath, at the coronation of this king. It is also mentioned that the king ordered the lord deputy to increase his allowance to the sum of 200 marks.* When he attained his nineteenth year, he obtained by the same favour a year's release of his wardship. He begun his military career at the same time with distinguished honour. It is briefly mentioned, after these incidents, by the antiquarians, that he accompanied the duke of Somerset in his expedition against the Scots. This requires some explanation; for though the Scottish war alluded to certainly was continued in the same year, yet it is as certain that it was not commanded by the duke of Somerset, who first declared war, and led an expedition into Scotland, in 1547, when Ormonde was but fifteen years of age. In the following years, the command of the armies sent against the Scots was intrusted to the earls of Shrewsbury and Northampton. But military training, at that period, formed so principal a part in education, that there is no improbability in supposing the military career of this earl to have commenced even so early. These conjectures are confirmed by the mention that he distinguished himself by his bravery in the battle of Musselburgh; better known in history as the battle of Pinkey, which took place 10th September, 1547. In this battle the Scots were defeated by the English, under the duke of Somerset, with the loss of 14,000 men, of whom 800 were gentlemen. The war was engaged in to compel the Scots to deliver up their young queen, who had been contracted to Edward VI. when they were both children.

* Collins, Lodge.

He obtained still higher distinction in his twenty-second year, when he commanded a troop of horse against the rebels headed by Sir Thomas Wyatt. This rebellion is supposed to have been caused by the discontent of the English at the marriage then on foot between Philip and Mary. The chief conspirators were the duke of Suffolk, Sir Thomas Wyatt, and Sir Peter Carew, who agreed with each other to raise their several counties of Cornwall, Kent, and Warwickshire. Through the indiscretion of Carew, the plot was soon detected. Carew escaped into France; the duke was seized before he could stir to any purpose; and Wyatt was left to pursue his desperate course alone. Of this course we shall only mention the terminating circumstances.

Wyat approached London at the head of a force sufficient to cause great alarm in the court, and to give him high hopes of success. To the queen's messengers, who desired to know his demands, he replied that he demanded to have the Tower and the queen delivered into his hands, with such changes in the council as he should prescribe. Of course these demands were rejected, and Wyatt pursued his march toward London. When he had reached the borough of Southwark, he found the bridge so well fortified that, contrary to his expectations, he could not effect a passage. He was, therefore, obliged to continue his march to Kingston, ten miles higher up the river. Here, too, he met with another dangerous delay—the bridge was broken down, and he could not pass without having it first repaired. Having effected this, he passed over with his men, now increased to six thousand. He then set forward on his march to London; but a gun-carriage having broken on his way, he lost more time in repairing it. Two days were thus consumed when he reached London, at nine in the morning of the 3d February, 1554. The captain of the train bands who had joined him deserted, and gave information that it was his plan to enter the city by Ludgate. The earl of Pembroke and lord Clinton at first came to the resolution to attack him while entering the city, and a partial attack took place.

It was at this period of the affair, that the only occasion occurs in which the young earl could have displayed his valour. Hollinshed, who gives the detail at greater length than we can afford to follow, describes two skirmishes which took place near Hyde Park, and in Charing Cross. In the first of these it was mentioned that while Wyatt was marching on the "nether way," towards St James's, "which being perceived by the queen's horsemen, who laie on either side of him, they gave a sudden charge, and divided his battel [*army*, marching in column] asunder hard behind Wyatt's ensigns, whereby so many as were not passed before with Wyatt, were forced to fly back towards Brainford." It was in this charge that the young earl must have taken part. The body thus separated, after a vain attack on St James's, Westminster, attempted to rejoin their leader, and were again assailed in Charing Cross, and scattered after a short resistance and a loss of twenty men. In the course of this affair, it became apparent that he was entangling his army in the streets and lanes which lay on his way towards Ludgate, so that it became impossible for his troops to extend their front, or in any way act in concert. Sending orders to have Ludgate closed, the queen's commanders contented themselves

with fortifying and placing strong detachments in the streets through which he passed, so as to render all retreat impossible. In the meantime, Wyatt went on anticipating no obstruction, and imagining the whole of his remaining course sure, until he came to the gate. There his entrance was impeded, and he was forced to halt; and it was not long before he learned that he was strongly barricaded in on every side. His artillery he had in his confidence left under a guard in Hyde Park, and was now completely entrapped in the midst of enemies, who possessed every advantage they could devise for his extermination. In this dreadful emergency he was accidentally met by Sir Maurice Barkleie, who was riding unarmed near London, and entered into conversation with him. Barkleie advised him to surrender. Wyatt saw the necessity; and, resolved to seize on the occasion, he mounted behind his adviser, and, so says Hollinshed, rode to the court voluntarily to yield himself prisoner. He was sent to prison; and, after an attempt to implicate the princess Elizabeth, which he subsequently retracted, he was executed in two months after on Towerhill.

Thus early distinguished, this earl came over to Ireland, where his own affairs demanded his presence, and, having attained his twenty-second year, it was time for him to take possession of his estates, and assume the place appertaining to his family and rank in the councils of his country. He was not long settled in his possessions, before an occasion arose for his military spirit to obtain fresh distinction. In 1556, the province of Ulster was disturbed by a party of Scots, who besieged Carrick Fergus; and, although they failed in their design upon this town, obtained advantages in different quarters by associating themselves with the O'Donells, and other chiefs who in these party wars had gathered power, and were beginning to assume a dangerous attitude. In July, the lord deputy, Ratcliff, marched against them. He was accompanied by Ormonde, who commanded 200 horse, and 500 foot, raised by himself and maintained at his own cost. On the 18th of the same month, the lord deputy's army came up with the Scots, and a sharp conflict ensued, in which the Scots and the insurgents were defeated with a loss of 200 slain. In this engagement the earl of Ormonde and Sir John Stanley have obtained the principal honour from all historians by whom this affair is mentioned. The three following years were distinguished by great military activity; and, through the whole course of the marches and encounters during this period, this earl supported the same conspicuous character among the foremost in every bold and difficult enterprise.

These occasions are too numerous and too little detailed by historical writers, to be here dwelt upon. The uniform distinction of the earl through the whole, is amply testified by the strong indications of the approbation of the English government. In each year, his rise is marked by some honourable mark of the royal favour. In 1555, his patent was confirmed for the royalties and liberties of Tipperary—as also his hereditary patent for the prize wines. In 1557, he received a grant of the religious houses of Athassil, Jerpoint, Callan, Thurles, Carrick, &c., with all their hereditaments in the counties of Tipperary, Kilkenny, and Waterford; the manor of Kilrush in the county of Kildare, &c., &c., to hold by the service of a single knight's fee, reserving

a rent of £49 3s. 9d., afterwards remitted by Elizabeth. The subsequent grants which he received from Elizabeth, fill more than a closely printed page of Collins and Archdall, from which the above are abridged.

Queen Elizabeth, in the first year of her reign, appointed this earl lord treasurer of Ireland, a post which he retained through his life. There is not a year in the first years of this queen's reign so eventful in Ireland, in which he did not bear a distinguished part, which amply maintain his claim to the foremost place in the councils and confidence of the government. To dwell on the most interesting of these events, would hereafter involve us in much repetition, as they form the material for the curious and striking history of the memorable insurgent chiefs of this reign, the Desmonds, O'Donell, and Shane O'Neill. But through the whole stormy tissue of rebellion, party war, and provincial disturbance, which seems in his time to be fast attaining its height of violence and frequency; whether as military commander or diplomatic pacificator, the earl's character appears alike eminently bright through the obscurity of the time. After being successively appointed to the most important offices of trust in every trying and difficult occasion, from 1559 to 1578, he was in the latter year made governor of the province of Munster, when he brought O'Sullivan More into subjection by force of arms, subdued Pierce Grace, Rory Oge, and the Mac-Swiney's, and took the earl of Desmond prisoner, with a slaughter of four thousand men and forty-six officers.

In 1581, his honourable career was rewarded by the high office of lord high marshall of England. He did not long continue in this exalted station; but his voluntary resignation is ennobled by the high and patriotic motive. He could not reconcile it to his sense of duty to retain a post of which the arduous and engrossing duties were such as imply an entire separation from his own country. He was allowed, upon his earnest suit, to resign; and in 1582, he returned with the appointment of general of Munster, and a supply of men. He, at the same time, obtained an addition of twopence a-day to the pay of soldiers employed in the Irish service, and by this means, much increased his popularity among the soldiers.

In Ireland his services were still called into action on each occasion, where activity, fidelity, and talent were required; and many instances occur in which these conspicuous qualities of his character are placed under requisition by the absence of the deputy, or by some occasion of unexpected emergency. In 1596, he was made a knight companion of the garter. He was appointed general of Leinster in 1597, when Tyrone's rebellion had assumed a formidable character; and subsequently in the same year, was made general of all her majesty's forces in Ireland. Nor was he long at the head of the military operations, when Tyrone applied to obtain a commission to treat with him, which was appointed; and a meeting having accordingly taken place at Duncalk, a truce for eight weeks was agreed upon, for the purpose of settling the terms of this great rebel's submission, by communication with the English government. These particulars we shall hereafter detail.

In January, 1600, the earl obtained a considerable victory over the Bourkes, whom he drove out of Ormonde. Redmond Bourke was forced,

with many of his men, into the Nore, where they were lost. On the following April, he went with the lord president of Munster to hold a parley with Owen Mac Rory O'More, who treacherously seized upon him; the lord president Carew escaped by the swiftness of his horse. Ormonde gave hostages for the payment of £3000, in case he should seek revenge.

After this, his conduct was not less distinguished by unremitting efficiency in his high station, until the death of the queen. She had ever retained the highest regard for him, and professed to consider him as her kinsman.* King James, on his accession, renewed his commission as commander of the Irish army.

His biographers mention, that a little before this period he had lost his sight—a fact which, according to the dates of some of the enterprises above mentioned, compared with that assigned for his personal misfortune, would seem to imply, that he must, when blind, have continued to take the field against the rebels: as the period of about fifteen years before his death, assigned as the time of his blindness by Collins, Lodge, &c., would make it to have occurred in 1599. He died in 1614, in the 82d year of his age, and was buried in the choir of St Canice's church, Kilkenny. His monument cost £400.

Among the few personal details which have been preserved of this illustrious person, it is mentioned, that his reputation was high for great intellectual endowments. He was not less remarkable for the advantages of a graceful and striking exterior. The queen called him her black husband, and his countrymen called him Dhu or Duffe, from the darkness of his complexion. In Ireland he was at the head of all those who pretended to courtesy, hospitality, and magnificence. He was scarcely less renowned in England, and on the continent, as the model of all that was held becoming and honourable, in the soldier and in the gentleman.

* Lodge.

✂ As this Work has now advanced beyond that period which most Irish historians have agreed in describing as having few and doubtful records, and no historical interest: the Editor thinks, that it may be satisfactory to those who are unacquainted with Irish history, to learn, that a considerable improvement in these respects, may be confidently expected in the forthcoming parts.



